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## EVALUATION OF KENTUCKY'S READ TO ACHIEVE PROGRAM SY 2014–2015

Report prepared for the  
Collaborative Center for Literacy Development



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## ABBREVIATION & DEFINITION GUIDE (ALPHA SORT)

**Administrator** – principal or other school leader

**CIITS** – Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System

**Comprehensive Intervention Model (CIM)** – a systematic design for identifying struggling readers, followed by a coordinated plan for layering and matching interventions in classroom and small group settings.

**Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC)** – a small group reading and writing program for students in 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grades with three elements: story-related activities, direct instruction, and integrated language arts/writing<sup>1</sup>

**Early Intervention in Reading (EIR)** – whole classroom or small group program to help struggling students especially with phonemic awareness, phonics, and contextual analysis<sup>2</sup>

**ELLCO** – Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation

**Infinite Campus** – provider and manager of the Kentucky Student Information System which supports Kentucky school districts to provide a secure and seamless integration for collecting data<sup>3</sup>

**FRPM** – Free and Reduced Priced Meals

**KDE** – Kentucky Department of Education

**K-PREP** – Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress

**LEP** – Limited English proficiency

**MAP** – Measures of Academic Progress

**NCES** – National Center for Education Statistics

**Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS)** – A version of class wide peer tutoring where teachers identify students who need additional help and pair them with students who can help them learn needed skills<sup>4</sup>

**Reading Mastery** – direct instruction program designed to provide explicit, systematic instruction in English language reading<sup>5</sup>

**Reading Recovery** – short term intervention of one-on-one tutoring for low-achieving first-graders<sup>6</sup>

**RTA** – Read to Achieve

**SES** – Socio-economic status

**SPED** – Special education

**STAR** – Standardized Test for Assessment of Reading

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<sup>1</sup> Source: What Works Clearing House Intervention Report (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=109>)

<sup>2</sup> Source: What Works Clearing House Intervention Report (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=156>)

<sup>3</sup> Source: Kentucky Student Information Systems (KSIS) (<http://education.ky.gov/districts/tech/sis/Pages/default.aspx>)

<sup>4</sup> Source: PALS Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (<https://kc.vanderbilt.edu/pals/index.html>)

<sup>5</sup> Source: What Works Clearinghouse Intervention Report (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/interventionreport.aspx?sid=417>)

<sup>6</sup> Source: Reading Recovery Council of North America (<http://readingrecovery.org/reading-recovery/teaching-children/basic-facts>)



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Read to Achieve Grant Program (RTA) was established in 2005 by the Kentucky General Assembly to help ensure students' reading proficiency by the end of the primary grades. The RTA fund imparts renewable, two-year grants to schools primarily for the hiring of an intervention teacher who provides short-term, intensive instruction to students who struggle with reading. As part of the RTA grant, schools received \$48,500 at the start of the 2014–15 school year. On average, administrators reported spending 94 percent of grant monies on teachers' salaries and, for many schools, the RTA grant did not cover the full cost of the program. Three-quarters of administrators reported supplementing the grant funds in order to pay for the RTA intervention program or teacher.

This executive summary includes the major findings from the evaluation and provides recommendations for future implementation of RTA. The evaluation was guided by the following questions:

(1) RTA teachers:

- Who are the RTA teachers and what is the relationship among RTA and traditional classroom teachers?
- What are classroom teachers and administrator perceptions of RTA teachers' roles and responsibilities as a part of the school system?
- How are RTA funds allocated?

(2) RTA students:

- Who are they and what is a typical RTA student experience?

(3) Outcomes: How do RTA students' performance on assessments change and compare to national norms?

(4) How do the grant approved reading intervention programs compare to one another?

- What are teachers' levels of training and confidence by program?
- How do the programs compare (e.g., frequency of intervention or length of intervention)?

(5) Pilot study: Can we identify high performing RTA schools?

(6) What are the perceived barriers and benefits of the RTA program?

- Perceptions across RTA teachers, classroom teachers, and administrators

## RTA TEACHERS' PREPARATION, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Data to explore the RTA teachers level of preparation, roles, and responsibilities was collected through surveys, interviews and observations.

- There were 321 RTA teachers (one in each RTA school) across Kentucky
- The majority of RTA teachers (95.6%) are highly qualified with Ranks 1 & 2, Masters, Doctorate, or National Board Certification.
- On average, RTA teachers had 17 years of total teaching experience and almost five years' of RTA teaching experience. However, it should be noted that for one-third of RTA teachers, the 2014–15 school year was their first year as a RTA teacher.

- Administrators report that they looked for the teacher's overall teaching experience (81.6%), past effectiveness (79.6%), and evidence of literacy leadership (65.3%) when hiring new RTA teachers.
- Initial data indicate communication between RTA and classroom teachers is beneficial to both parties. Few teachers reported not collaborating with an RTA teacher and classroom teachers report adjusting classroom instruction as a result of communication. Teachers were more likely to collaborate on issues related to students, such as consulting on progress, identifying students for the intervention, and monitoring progress.

## RTA STUDENTS LITERACY SERVICES AND EXPERIENCES

- There were 10,445 students served by the RTA program during the 2014–15 school year. This is 1,300 less students than last year.
- First-graders were the most widely served group (43.6%), followed by second-graders (23.0%), kindergarteners (18.9%), and third graders (14.5%).
- RTA teachers indicated program selection was based on a universal performance screener (95.3%) and/or a classroom teacher referral (90.3%), and about one-third (32.4%) of RTA teachers reported using multiple assessments.
- Nearly half of RTA teachers (45.2%) reported beginning interventions three weeks after the start of the school year and over one-third reported beginning interventions one to two weeks after the start of the school year.
- The intervention was mostly provided through one-on-one instruction or in small groups of four to five students. Students most often received the intervention during literacy or other content area time. The RTA teacher most often determined when the students are ready to exit the RTA program.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

- RTA students' MAP reading scores were significantly higher at spring administration compared to fall administration.
- Overall, RTA student fall to spring growth on the MAP Assessment was 17.1 points for kindergarteners, 15.8 points for 1<sup>st</sup> graders, 17.1 for 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, and 13.4 points for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders.
- Second and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade RTA students' growth was greater than the average predicted growth indicating 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade RTA students are making gains and closing the achievement gap.
- Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students are showing growth in reading across the school year, but this growth is comparable to national norms.
- RTA student gains from fall to spring vary somewhat by urbanicity with suburban students gaining the least with 14.22 and urban students gaining the most at 16.79.

## RTA INTERVENTION PROGRAM COMPARISONS

During the 2014–15 school year, the RTA grant limited the choice of interventions to only approved programs. Therefore, data collected for the current evaluation compares the RTA grant-approved intervention programs: EIR, Reading Recovery, CIM, or Reading Mastery.

- The majority of schools (73.1%) indicate they use Reading Recovery.
- Over the year, RTA teachers' caseloads averaged 33 students.
- On average, RTA teachers served the most students using EIR, followed by CIM and Reading Mastery. Reading Recovery tended to serve fewer students due to its one-on-one nature.
- Most interventions occurred daily and lasted an average of 30 minutes.
- Reading Recovery had the highest percentage (54.6%) of students who successfully exited the program.
- Most teachers (77.2%) received their training through face-to-face sessions. However, webinars (36.9%) and graduate classes (16.3%) were also reported.
- Nearly all teachers (91.6 %) reported feeling *Very Confident* or *Fairly Confident* implementing their intervention.

#### PILOT STUDY TO IDENTIFY TOP PERFORMING RTA SCHOOLS AND QUALITY LITERACY INSTRUCTION

- The data used to determine top performing schools included all students in the school, not only RTA intervention students. This means "top performing" does not necessarily reflect the quality of the RTA funded interventions.
- Nineteen classrooms were observed to pilot the feasibility of using the ELLCO as a means to capture classroom literacy practices across classrooms. The process was time intensive and the recommendation is to develop an instrument that would capture extent of use of best-practices across various classrooms instead of observing.
- Data used for analysis was from 2013. Since the schools receiving funding potentially change each year, not all current RTA schools had received a RTA grant in 2013; these schools were included in the analyses as RTA schools even if they did not have a RTA program in 2013.
- Proficiency on the K-PREP was used as the outcome variable despite the fact that K-PREP is administered to third, fourth, and fifth-grade students and does not reflect proficiency of the intended RTA Grant Program beneficiaries (K-3 students).

#### BARRIERS AND BENEFITS OF THE RTA PROGRAM

- The greatest benefit was that it helped students who might not otherwise receive intervention and that the program helped raise student confidence and scores.
- Administrators reported that the training and support for teachers, as well as, the small group instruction was a benefit.
- Both teachers and administrators reported that cost (needing more money) was a barrier, that there were too many students who needed help, and that time and space were limited to help so many.

#### CONCLUSION

The results of the evaluation indicate that RTA teachers are highly qualified and teachers and administration value the work RTA teachers do. There is strong evidence of collaboration and work in literacy teams and the RTA teachers are an integral part of the school system. Literacy teams meet frequently and work together to meet the needs of the students. Students are receiving intensive

(almost daily) services and show gains in skill. Students are exiting the program; however, a large percentage still continue in the intervention or are moved to a different intervention.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluation indicates that RTA is serving a large number of students in Kentucky. Administrators are using RTA funds to hire qualified teachers who are involved in the school, as well as, providing almost daily direct instruction to struggling readers. While there are many students being served through the interventions, there need to be more students reaching proficiency and exiting the program. The evaluation suggests the following recommendations:

- **Focus on RTA Grant Program implementation.** Assurance of RTA implementation fidelity will result in more meaningful results.
- **Continue training efforts.** With so many new teachers, training will improve consistency.
- **Expand the RTA Grant Program at RTA schools.** Overwhelmingly, stakeholders expressed student need exceeding program capacity. RTA teachers were not always able to reach all students who needed the intervention services. Increasing the number of available slots, increasing the time available for RTA interventions to occur, and/or increasing the number of literacy specialists are three possible solutions.
- **Continue parental involvement.** There is evidence of parental outreach. Teachers and administrators can seek to understand what more parents may need.
- **Consider the use of a universal literacy assessment at RTA schools.** To ensure all RTA schools are considered when assessing student outcomes it is important to have a universal measure that would allow measurement before program participation and after program completion.
- **Explore program factors related to student outcomes.** School collaboration, RTA teacher experience, and the intervention program used may be additional areas to explore. Additionally, comparing high performing and low performing RTA schools may allow for a better understanding of factors related to student success.
- **Examine alternate observation measures.** Finding a new measure, or modifying the current measure, to assess the quality of literacy specifically in intervention settings will provide more meaningful results.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

The Read to Achieve Grant Program (RTA) was established in 2005 by the Kentucky General Assembly to help ensure students' reading proficiency by the end of the primary grades. The RTA fund imparts renewable, two-year grants to schools primarily for the hiring of an intervention teacher who provides short-term intensive instruction to students who struggle with reading. The Read to Achieve Act of 2005 replaced former legislation that created the Early Reading Incentive Grant Program, which had been in place since 1998. Figure 1 shows the districts that contain at least one RTA grant funded school.

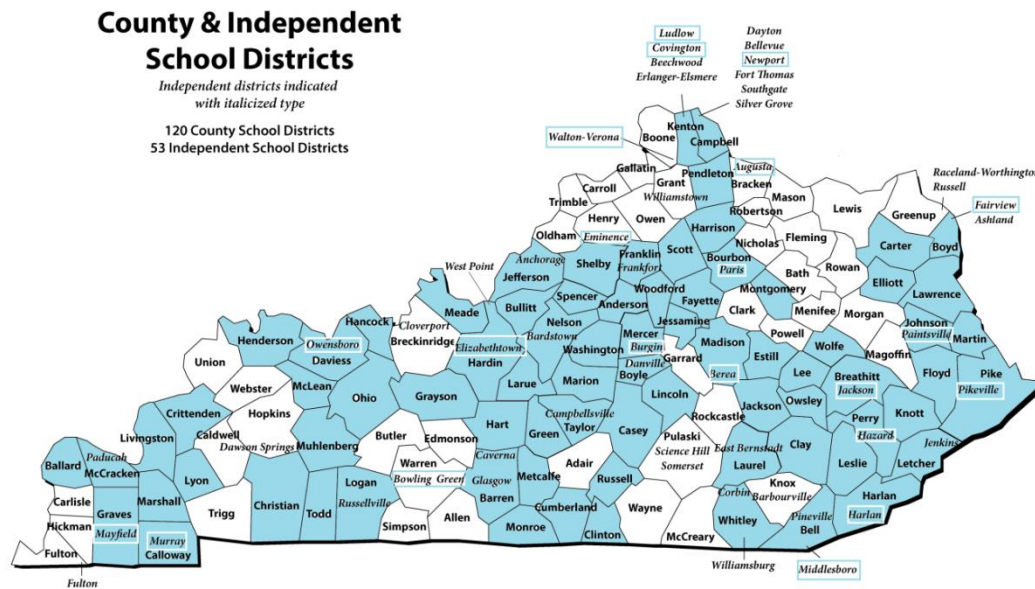


Figure 1. Map of RTA school districts

Schools applied to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) requesting funds in one of four funding rounds offered between 2005 and 2008. Schools that received funding in 2008 renewed their grants every two years. Table 1 shows the number of schools that participated in RTA between 2005 and 2014. Although most schools renewed their grants, the number of schools that participated in the RTA program fluctuated over the years due to schools opting out of the program after participating for one or more years (8 schools), or schools closing and/or merging. Since 2005, 170.34 million in funds has been distributed.

During the 2013–14 school year, KDE issued a new Request for Applications for RTA which opened the grant competition up to all public elementary schools that included primary grades. This meant RTA schools that had had funding since 2008 had to re-compete for their RTA grant funding for the following

academic year (2014-2015). The new (current) cohort of RTA schools included 67 new schools. In addition, some previously funded schools did not have successful grant proposals.

*Table 1. RTA funding in millions of dollars and number of schools participating 2005–2015*

Fiscal Year	Number of Schools	Total Funds	Average Awards
2005	99	7.1	—
2006	113	11.1	—
2007	212	20.5	—
2008	309	23.56	\$63,949
2009	330	22.56	\$46,835
2010	328	22.56	\$60,000
2011	324	18.88	\$55,000
2012	322	19.69	\$48,500
2013	321	15.71	\$49,207
2014	321	15.62	\$48,500
2015	321	15.62	\$48,500

— Data not available.

RTA Grant Program, schools received \$48,500 at the start of the 2014–15 school year. On average, administrators reported spending 94 percent of grant monies on teachers’ salaries. On average, administrators spent two percent or less of the grant funding on intervention materials, the intervention program, progress monitoring, and professional development.

For many schools, the RTA grant did not cover the full cost of the program. Three-quarters of administrators reported supplementing the grant funds in order to pay for the RTA intervention program or teacher. On average, administrators reported using \$16,465 in additional funds to support the RTA program. Some districts reported supplementing the RTA program with as little as two hundred and five dollars, while others spent over one hundred thousand dollars to supplement the program.

Supplemental funds come from two main sources; 44 percent of administrators reported using general funds to supplement the RTA program and about the same number (43.1 percent) reported using Title I funds (Figure 2). District funds, other funding sources, professional development funds, and special education funds were additional sources of supplemental funding. In reference to “other funds,” administrators cited sources such as daycare, other grants, Promise Neighborhood, PTA funds, JPCS Section 7 funds, SBDM funds, Section 6, and SEEK.

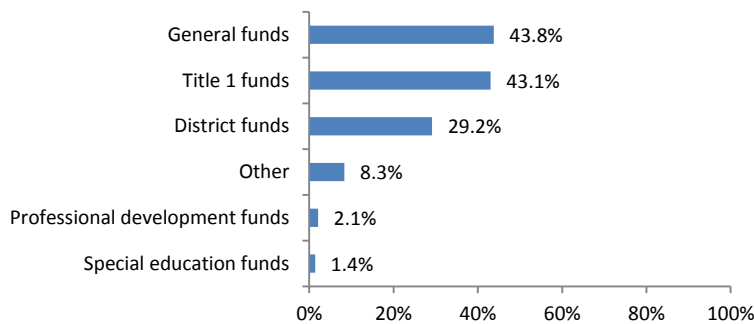


Figure 2. Sources of additional funding (N = 144)

## CHANGES TO PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The 2014-2015 school year data represents a new cohort of schools who received RTA grant funding. In addition, unlike in previous years, when schools could select any intervention, in the 2014–15 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education provided a list of approved programs and asked schools to select one or more research-based programs to implement. The lists varied by grade level and were approved for K-2 and 2-3. For example, K-1 teachers could select from: Reading Recovery/Comprehensive Intervention Model (CIM), Early Intervention in Reading (EIR), Reading Mastery. Some schools chose not to apply for RTA grant money so they could keep their non-approved program.

As in past years, participating schools were required to track and report to KDE all students who received RTA services and to closely monitor RTA student performance; however, in the 2014–15 school year RTA teachers were required to document and track RTA students using the intervention tab in the Infinite Campus program.

Some program requirements remained unchanged, this included: RTA teacher professional development and reading intervention program characteristics. RTA teachers were required to engage in ongoing professional development, such as participating in webinars hosted by KDE. Schools were required to implement reading intervention programs with the following characteristics:<sup>7</sup>

- Research-based, reliable, and replicable;
- An intensive, short-term program (i.e., not year-long). “Short term” is intentionally not defined so that schools can plan programs based on individual students’ needs, not on prescribed time limits;
- Designed for one-on-one or small group instruction;
- Be based on on-going assessment of individual student needs;
- Be provided to a student by a highly trained teacher.

<sup>7</sup> Source: RTA Assurance Statement

As part of the Read to Achieve Act of 2005, the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development (CCLD) was charged by the General Assembly to create a research agenda to evaluate the impact of the Read to Achieve programs on student achievement in reading.

## PRIOR EVALUATION FINDINGS

Prior evaluations have focused on implementation, as well as, achievement outcomes. The results of these studies have shown that most RTA students show more progress than their age-group peers regardless of socio-economic or geographic factors. The implementation evaluation provided evidence of fidelity with program expectations and that, overall, RTA was well implemented. In addition, reported perceptions of administration and teachers emphasized how important RTA was in meeting the needs of struggling readers.

Previous RTA evaluation reports highlighted the fact that there are other sources and methods of intervention delivery in RTA schools, in addition to RTA teachers and programs. For example, schools may use intervention programs and materials not funded by RTA. There may also be teachers who teach RTA intervention, but are not funded by RTA. Finally, it is possible students may receive multiple interventions during the same year or even at the same time. It is difficult to separate the effects of these sources from the effects of RTA on students' reading achievement. Therefore, this evaluation uses methods that are primarily descriptive in nature and does not attempt to connect students' reading achievement causally to RTA.

## OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STUDY

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach to provide a holistic perspective on all the components. Achievement data were collected from all 321 RTA schools. In addition, RTA teachers, classroom teachers, and school administrators completed surveys that captured the nature of the intervention and the collaboration within each school. The key research questions that guided this evaluation were:

(1) RTA teachers:

- Who are the RTA teachers and what is the relationship among RTA and traditional classroom teachers?
- What are classroom teachers and administrator perceptions of RTA teachers' roles and responsibilities as a part of the school system?
- How are RTA funds allocated?

(2) RTA students:

- Who are they and what is a typical RTA student experience?

(3) Outcomes: How do RTA students' performance on assessments change and compare to national norms?

(4) How do the grant approved programs compare to one another?

- What are teachers' level of training and confidence by program?
- How do the programs compare (frequency of intervention, length of intervention)?

(5) Pilot study: Can we identify high performing RTA schools?



(6) What are the perceived barriers and benefits of the RTA program?

- Perceptions across RTA teachers, classroom teachers, and administrators

## EVALUATION REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report includes 9 chapters, in addition to the introductory chapter. Chapter 2 describes the evaluation methods used to answer the evaluation questions. Chapter 3 describes the Read to Achieve teachers and teachers' and administrator perceptions of RTA teachers as part of the system of education in the school. Chapter 4 explores the Read to Achieve students and parental outreach. Chapter 5 explores student outcomes and Chapter 6 examines the differing characteristics including urbanicity, library media centers, and geographic location of the schools. Chapter 7 compares the reading intervention programs. Chapter 8 describes the pilot implementation study intended to quantify the quality of instruction. Chapter 9 discusses the barriers and benefits of the RTA program as identified by RTA teachers, classroom teachers, and school administrators. Chapter 10 provides conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2: EVALUATION METHODS

This chapter addresses how the evaluation was designed and conducted. The evaluation was a quasi-experimental, mixed methods approach to provide a holistic, contextual, perspective of the project (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007; Creswell 2003). The evaluation was guided by legislative requirements in addition to questions related to RTA program implementation.

### DATA SOURCES

The evaluation uses many data sources in order to answer the identified research questions. Quantitative and qualitative data were used to provide an accurate, complete depiction of the RTA intervention. Data sources included: surveys, state sponsored assessment databases, a state sponsored intervention database, semi-structured phone interviews, and structured observations. Data collection instruments are described below.

#### SURVEYS

All 321 RTA teachers were asked to complete three separate online surveys at three points during the 2014–15 school year: September, January, and May. The September and May surveys yielded a 100 percent response rate (N = 321). The response rate for the January survey was 99.7 percent (N = 320). The survey questions can be found in Appendices A, B, and C.

RTA teachers were asked to forward a link to an online survey or hand out a hard copy survey to classroom teachers of grades K-3 at their schools in May 2015. Respondents had the option of responding to the 28 questions survey online or by mail; 936 teachers completed the survey online and 69 teachers opted to respond to the survey by mail. Teachers from three-quarters (74.5 percent) of RTA schools had at least one classroom teacher respond; on average, four teachers responded per school. The survey questions can be found in Appendix D.

School-level administrators (e.g. principals) at all RTA schools were asked to complete an 18 question online survey in April 2015. Survey questions covered topics such as funding, RTA teacher ratings, and perceived benefits and challenges. In total, 144 Administrators from 139 schools responded. The survey questions can be found in Appendix E.

#### STATE SPONSORED ASSESSMENT DATABASES

Student assessment scores for Kentucky students in kindergarten through third grade were provided by KDE and were obtained from the CIITS database (N = 218,131). The CIITS database has demographic information and state mandated assessment data (K-PREP) on all Kentucky students. If schools use MAP or STAR assessments to evaluate early elementary students, the CIITS database also contains those assessment scores. Data used was from the 2014–15 school year.

In addition to the CIITS database, KPREP assessment data was also obtained from the KDE. K-PREP data and student demographic information from the 2012–13 school year was used to identify the top ten RTA schools.<sup>8</sup>

#### STATE SPONSORED INTERVENTION DATABASE

As part of the RTA grant, schools were asked to record and track student information in a KDE sponsored online portal—Infinite Campus. Using a special section of the portal (referred to as the “Intervention Tab”), RTA teachers recorded information related to student entry/exit dates, length, duration, and the intervention program used. Data for RTA students in kindergarten through third grade were obtained for the 2014–15 school year (N = 10,442).

#### SEMI-STRUCTURED PHONE INTERVIEWS

Phone interviews were conducted with RTA teachers (N = 10) and first-grade traditional classroom teachers (N = 10) at schools identified as top performers.<sup>9</sup> Interviews were conducted by two researchers over a two week period in May 2015. Each interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. The interview prompts can be found in Appendix F.

#### STRUCTURED OBSERVATIONS

Using the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation K-3 tool, three researchers observed nine elementary schools across the state of Kentucky. To establish inter-rater reliability, all the researchers observed the first school. After the initial reliability observation, observations were conducted by one researcher per school during a three week period at the end of April and beginning of May 2015. Researchers observed a traditional first-grade classroom as well as a RTA teacher’s classroom. Observations lasted around two hours per classroom and were scheduled during literacy instruction.

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<sup>8</sup> In order to begin scheduling school observations before the end of the school year, data available at the time were used rather than more recent data.

<sup>9</sup> Chapter 8 describes how top performing schools were identified.

## CHAPTER 3: READ TO ACHIEVE TEACHERS

RTA teachers are a major component of the RTA program. They are tasked with implementing the RTA Grant Program approved intervention programs, are often the main contact between grant administrators and schools, and have direct, day-to-day interactions with the intended beneficiaries of the grant (the students). Since RTA teachers play such a vital role in the RTA Grant Program, it is important to understand who they are, the amount of training they received, how they were hired, and how they are perceived by their colleagues.

*One-third of RTA teachers were new to the RTA program in the 2014–15 school year*

### DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the 321 RTA teachers, the majority of teachers were female (98.4%) and White/Caucasian (98.7%). The RTA grant required RTA teachers to be certified primary teachers with at least three years teaching experience in the primary grades with (or working toward) a Master's degree in literacy. Of the 320 responses 50% have a reading/writing endorsement or a specialist degree.

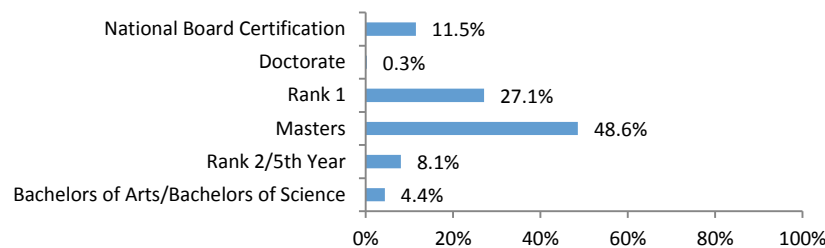


Figure 3. RTA teacher education level (N = 321)

Nearly half of all RTA teachers had a Master's degree (see Figure 3). RTA teacher's postgraduate degree areas were predominantly in Elementary Education (34.6 %), Reading Education (24.3 %), Literacy (7.2 %), Special Education (5.6 %), and Early Childhood Education (5.6 %).

On average, RTA teachers had 16.83 years of total teaching experience and 4.46 years of RTA teaching experience (see Figure 4). The 2014–15 school year was the first year one-third of the teachers were a RTA teacher.

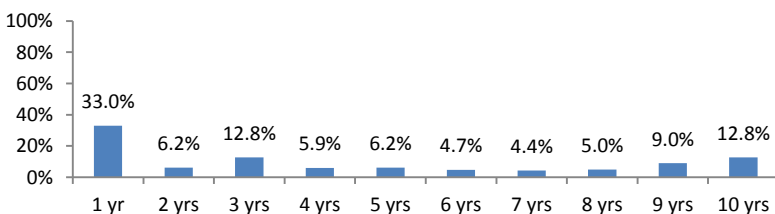


Figure 4. Percentage of teachers by years of experience as a RTA teacher (N = 321)

## HIRING

Survey responses were received from 144 administrators. A majority of those administrators (68%) were involved in the hiring process of RTA teachers at their schools. Of the 98 administrators involved in the hiring process, the top three qualifications they looked for when hiring RTA teachers were the teacher's overall teaching experience (81.6 %), past effectiveness (79.6 %), and evidence of literacy leadership (65.3 %) (see Figure 5).

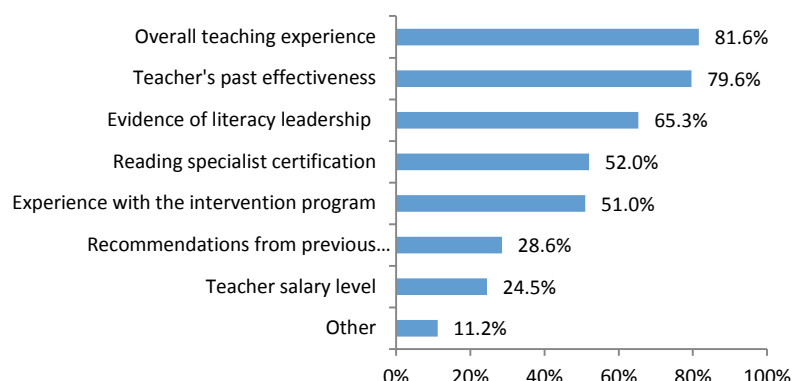


Figure 5. Qualifications administrators looked for when hiring RTA Teachers (N = 98)

## COLLEAGUES' PERSPECTIVES

The colleagues of RTA teachers (i.e., school administrators and traditional classroom teachers) were asked to rate RTA teachers on a number of qualities. Colleagues were asked how much they agreed that RTA teachers engaged in positive behaviors, such as: attending and leading decision-making literacy intervention meetings, providing training for others at the school, allowing others to observe them, collaborating with classroom teachers, coordinating or performing progress monitoring, taking leadership roles in family literacy nights, and serving as a literacy resource to others. Responses were ranked from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Table 2 shows both teachers and administrators weighted responses. For example, an average of 3 would indicate a neutral response.

*[Our RTA teacher is] a great resource. Any time we need anything with reading she's always there to help...*  
-Traditional classroom teacher

Responses between both administrators (N = 124) and teachers (average sample size of 942) were very similar and indicate an overall positive perception of RTA teacher involvement. Classroom teachers' responses from Table 2 indicate that RTA teachers are not often observed by teachers or parents to enhance the learning and understanding of others.

Table 2. Classroom teachers and administrators' perceptions of RTA teachers

	Teachers Average N= 942	Administrators N = 124
	Mean	Mean
Attends decision-making literacy intervention meetings	4.43	4.55
Leads decision making literacy intervention meetings	4.10	4.20
Provides training for others in their school and/or district	3.85	3.98
Lessons are observed	3.39	4.24
Collaborates with classroom teachers	4.38	4.56
Coordinates and/or performs progress monitoring duties for their intervention students as well as other RTI students at their school	4.43	4.60
Take leadership role for family literacy nights	4.14	4.09
Serves as a literacy resource to others	4.40	4.40

Both administrators and classroom teachers generally reported *strongly agree* or *agree* with statements related to RTA teacher qualities. Still, over one-fifth of administrators and classroom teachers *strongly disagreed*, *disagreed*, or *neither agreed nor disagreed* with statements related to RTA teacher leadership, including: leading decision making literacy intervention meetings, providing training for others in their school and/or district, and taking a leadership role for family literacy nights. Additionally, Table 2 shows that many traditional classroom teachers *strongly disagreed*, *disagreed*, or *neither agreed nor disagreed* that RTA teachers' lessons were observed by parents or teachers to enhance the learning and/or understanding of others.

## COLLABORATION AND LITERACY TEAMS

Although RTA teachers are important stakeholders in the RTA Grant Program, students spend only a small portion of the day with them receiving the intervention. During the remainder of the school day students spend time in their traditional classrooms; therefore, it is important to understand how traditional and RTA teachers interact and collaborate.

### FORMAL COLLABORATIVE TEAMS

Generally, classroom and RTA teachers report collaborating with one another. Ninety-one percent of the 321 RTA schools have a formally identified literacy or RTA team. Nearly all (99.3%) of the RTA teachers are on the team. Principals are part of the team in 95.2% of the groups and traditional classroom teachers (84%) are reported as participants. Other interventionists were reported in 59.1% of the cases, a data coordinator (56%), and a parent (15.1%). Counselors, Special Education teachers, Title I teachers, and Curriculum Specialists are a few examples of the types of "other interventionists" RTA teachers indicated were part of the literacy/RTA team.

The frequency of literacy/RTA team meetings varied across the 291 responses. The majority of responses (36.4%) indicated they met once a month or as needed (24.1%). Some reported meeting once a week (9.6%), two times per month (10%) or four times per year (8.9%). Teachers interviewed

expressed how important regular meetings were to them. Teachers reported many benefits of regular meetings. Verbatim teacher responses are below:

*We talk about whether their goals have been met, where they're falling short, and just collaborate to see what we need to be doing together as a group. That's one of the meetings we always do very faithfully. It gives us a lot of insight into what's still going on. (Teacher; AY 14)*

*We talk about what needs to be done and what we can improve on. ... Being able to see [the principal] and sit down and talk to him and seeing everybody and hearing how your students are doing in other classrooms, it's really helpful for how you drive your instruction. (Teacher; AY 14)*

There were 291 responses to the question of who leads the RTA meetings. Principals or other administrators tended to lead team meetings (47%), although RTA teachers reported leading team meetings at over one-third (33%) of schools. Data coordinators led 11 percent of the groups and others were mentioned 8 percent of the time. The traditional classroom teacher was reported as leading team meetings in one percent of the responses.

*[The] collaboration, those monthly meetings, is where we really get into the meat. We have all the interventionists in there and all the classroom teachers for that grade level attend those meetings also with our district RTI coordinator. So, that's where we make our decisions for what each student needs. That is really the backbone of our program." (Teacher; AY 14)*

RTA teachers assist the program in a variety of ways. Figure 6 shows the different ways they are contributing with both the teachers and the school as a whole. Their greatest involvement is with making decisions about individual students

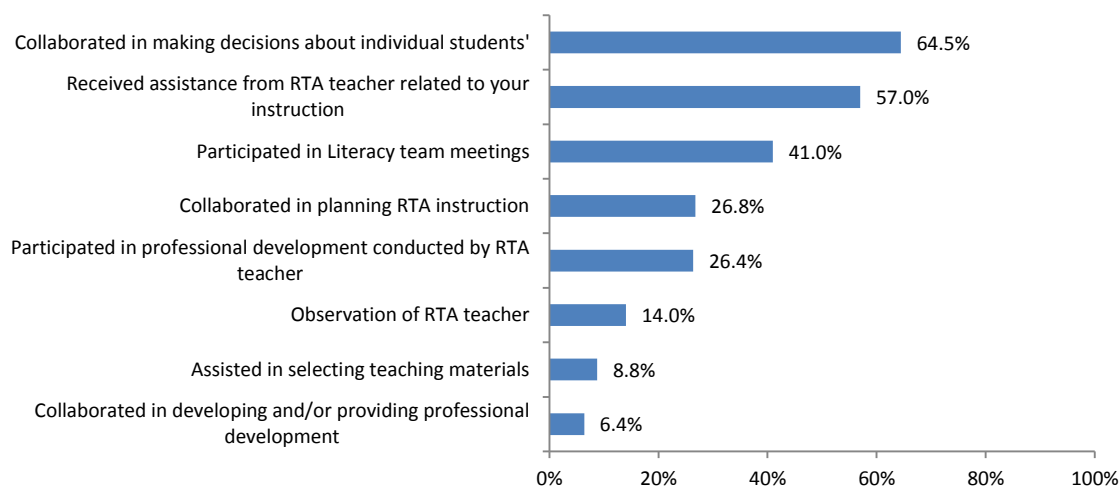


Figure 6. Classroom teacher involvement in RTA program (N = 1,005)

## RTA TEACHER AND CLASSROOM TEACHER COMMUNICATION

In addition to formal meetings, teachers interviewed at “top performing” RTA schools also reported frequent informal check-ins. Check-ins might happen when returning a student to a classroom, over lunch, during planning time, or via email. RTA and classroom teachers reported sharing student records and data and emphasized more frequent communication if a student was new to the program. Some RTA teachers expressed frustration over the lack of time available for meeting with classroom teachers, citing a significant caseload as a barrier.

*[The RTA teacher] tells me strategies that she uses in RR and I try to mock those strategies in my class.*  
-Traditional classroom teacher

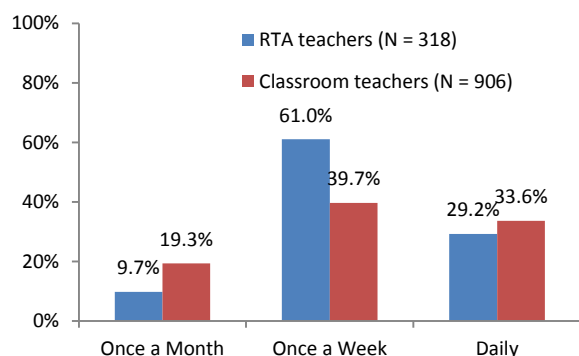


Figure 7. Frequency of RTA and classroom teacher communication

Across all RTA schools, RTA teachers and classroom teachers tended to communicate on a regular basis although the reported frequency varied by teacher type (RTA or classroom); 61 % of RTA teachers reported communicating once a week whereas 40 % of classroom teachers reported the same (see Figure 7). The differences in perception may be because RTA teachers may communicate weekly with classroom teachers, but not the same teacher(s) each week.

Initial data indicate communication between RTA and classroom teachers is beneficial to both parties; teachers adjusted their classroom instruction as a result of communication. RTA teachers were receptive to classroom teachers' feedback and suggestions; nearly all (96.5 %) adjusted their classroom instruction based on communication with classroom teachers. Many classroom teachers were equally receptive to RTA teachers; 82 % adjusted their classroom instruction after communicating with RTA teachers. Data suggest different types of teachers had differing areas of expertise; RTA teachers adjusted their grouping and instructional content/skills most often while classroom teachers tended to adjust their reading material and method of providing instruction (see Figure 8).



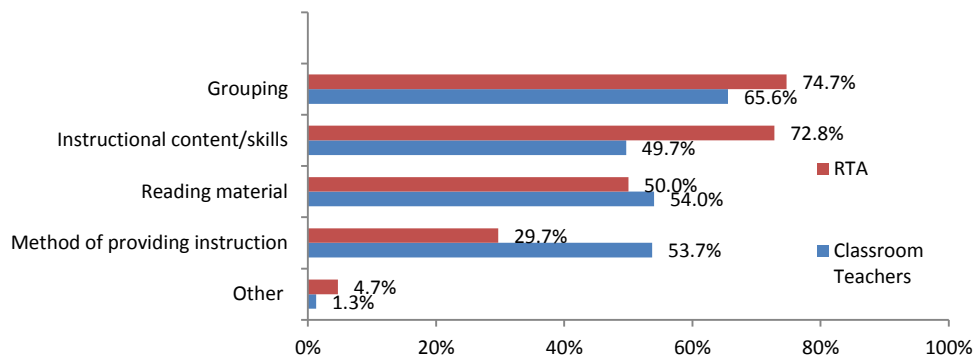


Figure 8. Type of classroom instruction adjusted after communication among teachers (N = 320)

### CLASSROOM TEACHER INVOLVEMENT

Classroom teachers reported their involvement in the RTA Program in a variety of ways. Collaborating in making decisions about individual students, receiving assistance from RTA teachers related to instruction, and participating in literacy team meetings were the most common ways classroom teachers were involved. Figure 9 shows the ways in which classroom teachers reported collaborating with RTA teachers. Very few teachers reported not collaborating with an RTA teacher (1.5 %). Teachers were more likely to collaborate on issues related to students, such as consulting on progress, identifying students for the intervention, and monitoring progress rather than issues pertaining to teaching, such as planning instruction or professional development activities or selecting teaching materials.

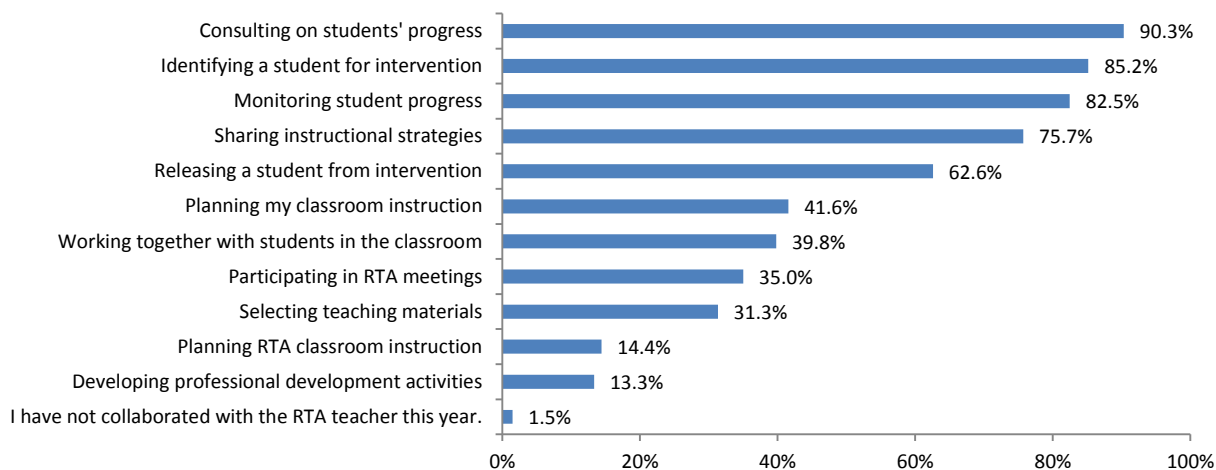
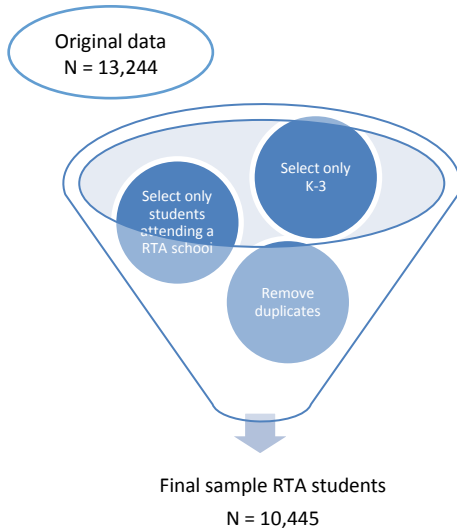


Figure 9. Classroom teachers' collaboration with RTA teachers (N = 1,005)

## CHAPTER 4: READ TO ACHIEVE STUDENTS

Students benefiting from the RTA Grant Program may have greatly different experiences; for example, the RTA teachers may have different approaches, or the number of hours students receive the intervention may vary. Although the overall goal of the RTA program is to improve student literacy skills, understanding how students experience the RTA Program is vital to understanding why the program is

*Figure 10. Overview of RTA student sample selection*



or is not having a positive effect.

Data pertaining to students' experiences were obtained from the Intervention Tab database. The 2014–15 school year was the first year the Intervention Tab was used by RTA teachers.

### RTA STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

There were 10,445 students served by the RTA program during the 2014–15 school year. First-graders were the most widely served group (43.6 %), followed by second-graders (23.0 %), kindergarteners (18.9 %), and third-graders (14.5 %).

Table 3 shows RTA student demographics. Males comprised 55 percent of RTA students. Roughly three-quarters of RTA students were white (77.6 %). Black and

Hispanic students made up an additional 18 percent of students (9.8 and 8.4 % respectively).

Approximately six percent of RTA students were considered Limited English Proficiency and nearly one quarter of RTA students were considered Special Education.

*Table 3. RTA student demographics*

RTA Students (N = 10,445)	
Gender	
Female	45.2
Male	54.8
Race/Ethnicity	
White	77.4
Black	9.8
Hispanic	8.4
Two or more races	3.7
Asian	0.4
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1
LEP Status	6.2
SPED Status	24.1

## RTA PROGRAM ENTRY

The RTA Grant Program Assurance Statement does not specify specific criteria for student participation in the RTA program. It states, “intervention services will be provided to struggling primary program readers within the school based upon ongoing assessment of their needs” and requires a diagnostic assessment to be administered.

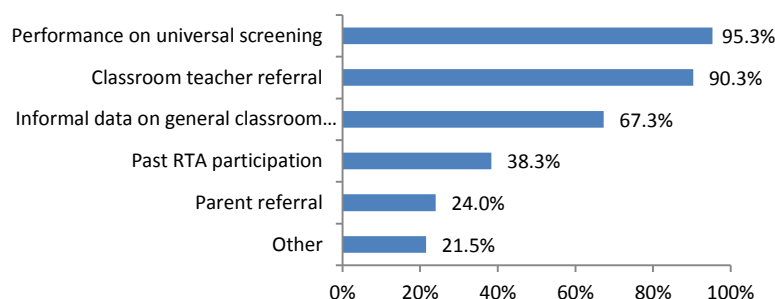


Figure 11. RTA program entrance selection criteria (N = 321)

Nearly all RTA teachers indicated student selection into RTA approved interventions was based on a universal performance screener (95.3 %) and/or a classroom teacher referral (90.3 %) (see Figure 11). Table 4 lists the universal performance screeners RTA teachers reported using. About one-third (32.4 %) of RTA teachers reported using multiple assessments, although how those assessments were used (i.e. by grade or differing screening levels) was not specified. In addition, a few RTA students (2.5 %) were referred for services, although who or how students were referred was not specified.

Table 4. Reported diagnostic assessments from phone interviews (N = 20) and RTA teacher survey (N = 321)

A to Z Running Records	Journeys Assessment
AIMS Wed	Keystones
Baseline Reading Test	LLI
Brigance	MAP
Clay's Observation Survey- Running Records	NEXT
Comprehensive Intervention Model Leveling	Observation survey
Texts	
CORE Literacy Library Assessing Reading	P.A.S.T.
DEA	PAS
Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)	Reading Recovery assessment
DIBELS	Reading Street Diagnostic Measures
Discovery Ed.	Rigby Benchmark Assessment
Discovery Education Assessment	Scott Foresman Text Level
Early Literacy Testing	Slosson Oral Reading Test (SORT)
Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment	SRI
GRADE	STAR
i-Ready	Thinklink

During phone interviews, RTA teachers and traditional classroom teachers were also asked about the selection process. All teachers reported using some type of diagnostic test to help identify students for RTA interventions. Diagnostic assessments were not the only tool used to identify and select students.

Following the overall RTA school trend, selection was based heavily on collaborative discussions between RTA teachers and classroom teachers. In many cases, the diagnostic tool would provide a pool of possible recipients which guided discussions regarding the students most in need. Additionally, students were monitored throughout the school year and often across multiple years. One RTA teacher reported collaborating with Head Start teachers to assess kindergarteners coming into the school, and then following those students throughout the year to help identify possible first-grade candidates. Students who had, or were in the process of receiving, an IEP were typically not considered for the RTA program.

*The fact that she's willing to collaborate with me and allows me to have a say [in student selection] is extremely valuable because I see a lot of things that [the RTA teacher] may not see in one sitting.*  
-Traditional classroom teacher

Based on data from 10,445 records, students tend to start RTA interventions at the start of school semesters.

Table 5 shows that over half of students (58.4 %) started participating in the RTA intervention at the start of the school year (August or September). The start of the second semester (January) was the next time point at which a large number of RTA students began participating (14.5 %). Review of 9,045 records with end dates shows that most students (48.5%) end in May.

*Table 5. Percentage of students starting and ending by month*

	Start	End
January	14.4%	13.3%
February	6.1%	5.0%
March	4.9%	4.2%
April	1.9%	7.9%
May	0.1%	48.5%
June	0.0%	1.4%
July	0.0%	0.0%
August	25.2	0.2%
September	33.2	1.9%
October	9.1%	4.4%
November	2.6%	3.9%
December	2.4%	9.4%

Interventions began relatively soon after the start of the school year. Nearly half of the 321 RTA teachers (45.2 %) reported beginning interventions three weeks after the start of the school year and over one-third (36.1%) reported beginning interventions one to two weeks after the start of the school year. Only 19.3 percent started at week 4 or later.

## PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

Out of 10,445 students, a majority of RTA students were taught by certified teachers (98.8 %) and received the RTA approved interventions in-person (98.8 %), and on-site (88.1 %). Most RTA teachers reported using group sizes of less than six, with 85 percent reporting one-on-one instruction and 84 percent reporting groups of four to five students (see Figure 12).

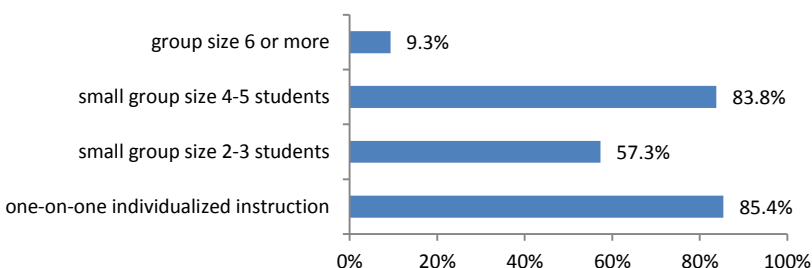


Figure 12. Types of intervention groups used by RTA teachers

Of the 10, 445 cases, nearly three-quarters (73.4%) of students received the RTA approved intervention in 30 minute sessions. Approximately nine percent received intervention for less than 30 minutes and three percent worked for 45 minutes and a very small percentage (0.7%) worked for 60 minutes. Additionally, a majority (79.5%) of students received the intervention daily. Approximately 17.3% received intervention 3-4 days per week and a small percentage (1.3%) received instruction only two days per week. On average, RTA students received 30.7 hours of intervention instruction over the school year.

*I like that we work together as a team ....using that process and using the teacher's input, it's all beneficial. Because sometimes I forget what a 3rd grader should sound like when they're reading because I'm working with interventions all day...*

*-RTA teacher*

Nearly half of RTA teachers (48.4 %) reported that students most often received the intervention during literacy or other content area time, which meant students were missing about 30 minutes of regular classroom time. Perhaps in order to avoid students missing class time, one-fifth of RTA teachers reported serving students during a dedicated school-wide intervention time. (See Figure 13).

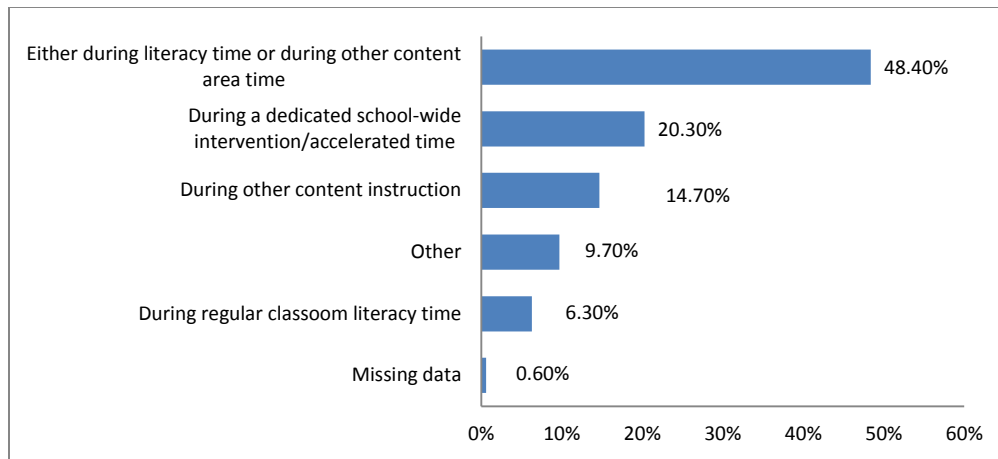


Figure 13. Time when intervention is received (N = 321)

## PROGRAM EXIT

RTA teachers and classroom teachers were overwhelmingly responsible for deciding if students were ready to exit the RTA intervention (95.9% and 78.1% respectively) (see Figure 14).

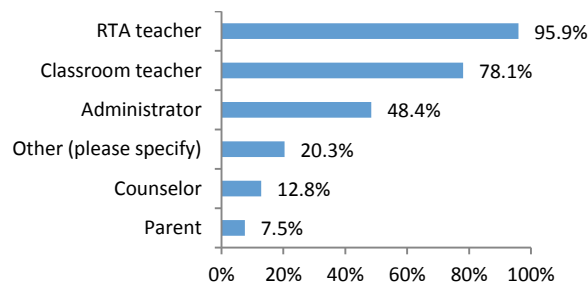


Figure 14. Person responsible for determining RTA student program exit as reported by RTA teachers (N = 320)

Satisfying established goals and reading levels was the most frequent exit criteria reported by RTA teachers (88.1%). Achieving a target score on an assessment, reaching grade reading level, and classroom performance as judged by the classroom teacher were also widely reported criteria for exiting RTA programs (Figure 15).

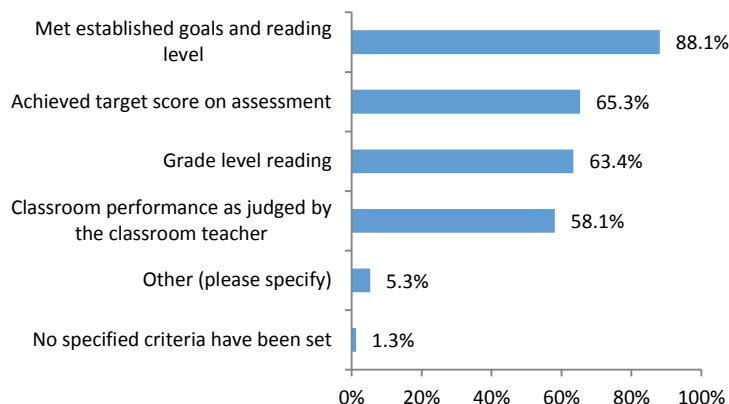


Figure 15. Exit criteria reported by RTA teachers (N =320)

Based on data from 10,445 student records, 34% of students successfully exited the RTA approved intervention program. Approximately one-fourth (26%) continued in the intervention and 16 % of students were exited to another intervention to better meet their needs. If students did not make progress, they were referred for special education, or in some instances retained.

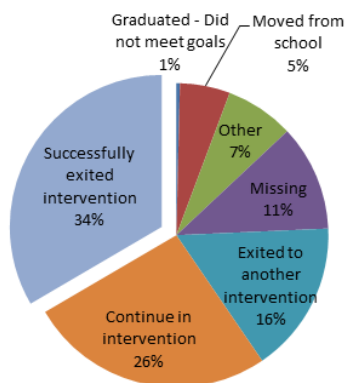


Figure 16. RTA program exit results (N = 10,445)

*"Students, if they are having trouble making gains and progress we'd like to see, often those students will repeat a grade level and or we will change their intervention to a different intervention to see if that will work. And depending on their history if we think that there may be a need, we may fill out a referral for those students. But only after we try different avenues to get that progress. -RTA teacher*

Phone interviews with teachers provided some insight into potential exiting barriers. Four teachers interviewed mentioned student behavioral problems or the need for special education referral when discussing students who continued in the RTA program:

*If they don't discontinue... like if you've got a child that's been in RR for 20 weeks and they don't make progress, nine times out of ten those students are gonna [sic] be referred later on for additional services. (Teacher; AY14)*

*A lot of time we find that the students that don't exit are the distracted ones, behavior problems in the classroom. (Teacher; AY14)*

Although not conclusive, the possibility of co-occurring issues reducing successful exit from the RTA program might be an area for further exploration.

Although 23 percent of RTA teachers felt that all students needing the RTA intervention at the school received it, the majority (74.7%) felt that, on average, an additional 23 students at their school could benefit from the intervention. RTA teachers reported as few as one student and as many as 286 students could have benefited from the RTA program, but did not receive it.

## PARENTAL OUTREACH

Almost half of RTA students' parents were notified about the RTA intervention program (47.6 %).

Although one-quarter (25.8 %) of parents received resources, less than five percent of parents attended a meeting related to the RTA intervention or were somehow included in the intervention program (4.4% and 2.5% respectively).



## CHAPTER 5: STUDENT OUTCOMES

As the 2014–15 school year was the first year of the revamped RTA Grant Program, assessing its effect on third-grade (or later) proficiency levels on the K-PREP literacy test was unfeasible due to data availability.<sup>10</sup> The MAP assessment is generally considered a reliable predictor of K-PREP scores; as a proxy, growth on MAP scores from fall to spring was examined.<sup>11</sup> Only students with MAP assessment data were used in this analysis; 58 percent of RTA students had MAP assessment data.

### RESULTS

Table 6 shows the average fall and spring MAP scores as well as the average fall to spring growth of students with MAP assessment data. The table displays the data by grade and by subgroups: gender, race/ethnicity, SPED status, and LEP status. In order to provide context, national grade level norms are included in the table. Analyses were conducted to determine if RTA students' scores on MAP reading assessments increased significantly from fall administration to spring administration. Results show RTA students' MAP reading scores were significantly higher at spring administration compared to fall administration.

When assessing student outcomes by grade level, mean reading growth for second and third-grade RTA students is statistically significantly greater than the average predicted growth that would be expected for second and third-grade students ( $t(1539) = 10.95, p < .0001$  and  $t(981) = 9.27, p < .0001$  respectively). This growth pattern would be expected since students beginning the school year at lower reading levels than average typically grow more across the year.<sup>12</sup> These scores indicate RTA students in second and third-grade are making gains and closing the achievement gap. Students in kindergarten and grade are showing growth in reading across the school year, but this growth is more comparable to the national norms of the average kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade student.

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<sup>10</sup> K-PREP data becomes available in the fall of the following school year; therefore data for the 2014–15 was not available for analysis for the present evaluation.

<sup>11</sup> Northwest Evaluation Association. (2012). *A study of the alignment of the NWEA RIT Scale with Kentucky's Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP)*. (n.p.): Author.

<sup>12</sup> Source: 2015 NWEA Measures of Academic Progress Normative Data (<https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2015/06/2015-MAP-Normative-Data-AUG15.pdf>)

Table 6. Mean student growth of RTA students with MAP assessment data

	N	Mean Fall MAP (SD)	Mean Spring MAP (SD)	Mean Growth (SD)	Mean Fall MAP (SD)	Mean Spring MAP (SD)	Mean Growth (SD)
Kindergarten	1,114	135.4 (7.62)	152.5 (9.45)	17.1 (9.16)	141.0 (13.54)	158.1 (12.85)	17.1 (8.11)
Male	619	134.6 (8.04)	151.8 (9.70)	17.1 (9.58)			
Female	495	136.4 (6.94)	153.4 (9.08)	16.9 (8.60)			
White	865	135.7 (7.41)	152.8 (9.31)	17.2 (9.31)			
Black	94	134.0 (8.11)	149.9 (9.19)	15.8 (8.82)			
Hispanic	99	134.5 (8.50)	152.2 (9.56)	17.7 (7.75)			
Asian	‡	‡	‡	‡			
Native Pacific Islander	‡	‡	‡	‡			
Two or more races	51	135.1 (7.50)	151.7 (11.46)	16.5 (9.18)			
SPED	279	134.7 (7.74)	150.8 (9.84)	16.1 (9.64)			
LEP	57	132.6 (8.35)	151.4 (9.56)	18.8 (7.30)			
1 <sup>st</sup> grade	2,426	153.3 (9.38)	169.1 (10.45)	15.8 (9.02)	160.7 (13.08)	177.5 (14.54)	16.8 (8.09)
Male	1336	152.9 (9.56)	168.9 (10.51)	16.1 (9.40)			
Female	1090	153.8 (9.12)	169.3 (10.25)	15.5 (8.53)			
White	1905	153.7 (9.37)	169.6 (10.56)	15.9 (9.20)			
Black	192	152.5 (8.68)	167.8 (8.44)	15.3 (8.00)			
Hispanic	231	151.1 (9.36)	166.8 (10.37)	15.7 (8.71)			
Asian	10	148.0 (11.45)	164.3 (13.27)	16.3 (12.14)			
Native Pacific Islander	‡	‡	‡	‡			
Two or more races	80	152.2 (9.67)	167.8 (10.75)	15.6 (7.85)			
SPED	595	151.6 (9.96)	166.6 (11.29)	15.0 (9.31)			
LEP	179	148.7 (9.91)	165.8 (10.21)	17.1 (9.28)			
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	1,540	156.5 (9.09)	173.6 (12.64)	17.1 (11.13)	174.7 (15.52)	188.7 (15.21)	14.0 (8.20)
Male	875	155.4 (8.98)	172.5 (13.07)	17.1 (11.86)			
Female	665	157.9 (9.05)	175.1 (11.92)	17.1 (10.11)			
White	1157	156.7 (9.19)	174.2 (12.63)	17.5 (11.28)			
Black	152	156.2 (8.69)	171.0 (12.20)	14.8 (11.14)			
Hispanic	133	156.2 (8.38)	171.4 (12.25)	15.2 (10.27)			
Asian	10	165.0 (14.12)	182.6 (17.95)	17.6 (9.40)			
Native Pacific Islander	‡	‡	‡	‡			
Two or more races	83	154.7 (8.40)	173.0 (12.21)	18.3 (10.02)			
SPED	371	153.5 (7.75)	169.6 (12.52)	16.1 (11.73)			
LEP	104	155.5 (7.98)	171.8 (11.38)	16.3 (9.47)			
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	982	173.8 (10.98)	187.1 (12.24)	13.4 (10.29)	188.3 (15.85)	198.6 (15.10)	10.3 (7.59)
Male	499	172.1 (11.59)	186.6 (13.05)	14.5 (11.46)			
Female	483	175.5 (10.05)	187.6 (11.34)	12.1 (8.79)			
White	782	174.0 (10.91)	187.6 (12.26)	13.6 (10.30)			
Black	70	172.2 (10.72)	184.5 (12.37)	12.3 (11.27)			
Hispanic	76	172.4 (11.94)	184.0 (11.75)	11.7 (9.03)			
Asian	‡	‡	‡	‡			
Native Pacific Islander	†	†	†	†			
Two or more races	49	175.0 (10.58)	188.3 (11.38)	13.3 (10.87)			
SPED	233	168.8 (11.13)	182.5 (13.41)	13.7 (11.83)			
LEP	41	173.0 (11.08)	185.0 (11.03)	12.0 (9.89)			

‡ Reporting standards not met; N is < 5 which is too small to report.

† Not applicable

## LIMITATIONS

It is important to address the limitations of the present evaluation in order to interpret the results in context. First, conclusively determining the effect the RTA Grant Program has on student outcomes is, in part, dependent on implementation; findings suggest the RTA Grant Program was not implemented completely as intended (i.e., some RTA teachers may have used unapproved interventions). Without implementation fidelity, the risk of confounding factors greatly increase and it becomes difficult to determine the driving force behind student growth (or lack thereof).

Secondly, the sample of RTA students was restricted to those students with MAP data which represents 58 percent of RTA students. Limiting the sample, although necessary, introduces additional biases based on which schools may choose to use MAP data versus those which to not. Therefore, results may differ if all RTA students are included in the analyses.

## CHAPTER 6: SCHOOLS WITH DIFFERING CHARACTERISTICS

The state of Kentucky has a diverse student body served through 173 school districts and 1,233 schools. The five regions of the state provide unique opportunities and present challenges for educators. Therefore, examining RTA outcomes at the school level may provide insight into the importance context plays on impact. There were 321 RTA schools across the state and of those schools, MAP data was available for 204 schools (64 %).

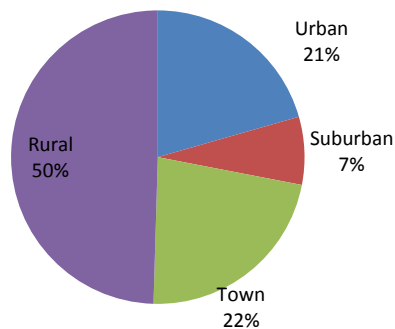
### URBANICITY

Urbanicity was assigned based on the most recent (2012–13) NCES urban-centric locale codes.<sup>13</sup> The codes are assigned based on a school's proximity to an urbanized area. Table 7 defines the different types of codes; for simplicity, codes were reduced to rural, town, suburban, and urban.

*Table 7. Urbanicity codes and definitions*

Urbanicity Type	Definition
Urban	Territory inside an urbanized area and inside a principal city
Suburban	Territory outside a principal city and inside an urbanized area
Town	Territory inside an urban cluster
Rural	Census-defined rural territory

Half of all RTA schools were located in rural areas with two-fifths located in urban and town areas (split equally), and the remaining seven percent located in suburban areas (see Figure 17).



*Figure 17. RTA Schools by urbanicity (N = 321)*

Table 8 shows the average fall to spring MAP growth broken down by urbanicity of the 204 schools with MAP assessment data. The largest difference in average school-level growth was 2.5 points and was between RTA schools in urban and suburban areas; however, there were no statistically significant differences between the differing urbanities.

<sup>13</sup> More information can be found at: [https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/rural\\_locales.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/rural_locales.asp)

Table 8. RTA school average fall to spring MAP growth by urbanicity (N = 204)

	Number of Schools	Mean	Std Dev
Urban	36	16.79	4.170
Suburban	24	14.22	3.796
Town	53	15.70	3.241
Rural	91	16.45	4.516

## REGIONS

Average school growth was compared by region. Five regions were used: central, Louisville, northern, eastern, and western. Figure 18 shows the regions of Kentucky by school district as well as the percentage of RTA schools in each region.

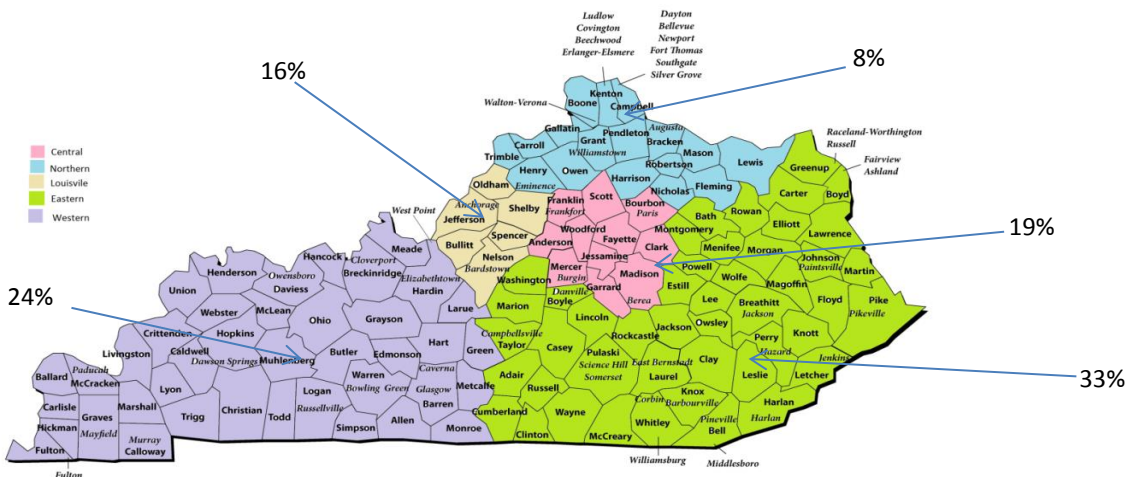


Figure 18. Map of Kentucky Regions

Most of the 204 RTA schools with available MAP scores were located in the Central Region. The Louisville region has the fewest schools. Table 9 shows average fall to spring MAP growth by region for RTA schools with MAP assessment data. The largest difference in average school-level growth was 1.5 points and was between RTA schools in the Central Region and the Louisville Region; however, there were no statistically significant differences between the differing regions.

Table 9. RTA school average fall to spring MAP growth by region

Regions	Number of Schools (%)	Mean	Std Dev
Central	61 (29.9%)	16.62	3.683
Louisville	22 (10.8%)	15.12	3.166
Northern	23 (11.3%)	15.36	3.368
Eastern	57 (27.9%)	15.90	5.361
Western	41 (20.1%)	16.27	3.574

## LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS

School library media centers were examined as a proxy for school resources and to explore a possible correlation with student success.

Nearly all RTA schools (282 schools) had a library media center program. Of those with a library media program, about three-quarters of RTA teachers reported the quality of the centers as strong. Table 10 shows RTA school average fall to spring MAP growth by the RTA teacher rated quality of the school's library media center program. Of those who chose to respond (N = 175), the majority report a strong program. Although RTA schools with strong library media programs had slightly more growth, on average, than schools with a weak program (16.0 points compared to 15.9) the difference does not reach statistical significance.

*Table 10. RTA school average fall to spring MAP growth by quality of library media center*

Library Media Center Quality	Number of responses	Mean	Std Dev
Strong program	141	16.04	4.024
Weak program	34	15.90	4.075

## CHAPTER 7: RTA APPROVED INTERVENTION PROGRAM COMPARISONS

### PROGRAM USE

In September 2014, 321 RTA teachers were asked about the primary interventions they were implementing.<sup>14</sup> Reading Recovery was the most popular program with nearly three-quarters (73.1%) of RTA teachers using it as a primary intervention program. Approximately, forty-eight percent of RTA teachers reported using CIM as a primary intervention program, followed by EIR (23.1%), and Reading Mastery (2.2%).

As Figure 19 shows, when assessed by grade, CIM is reported as the most widely used for kindergarten, second, and third-grades (63.8, 79.2, and 63.3 % respectively) while Reading Recovery was used most widely used in first-grade (61.1 %).

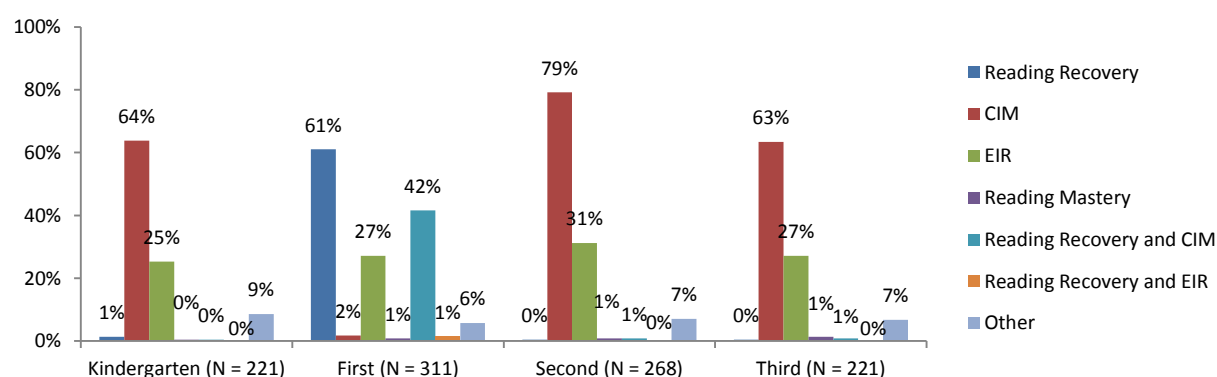


Figure 19. Program use reported by RTA teachers by grade in winter 2015

### IMPLICATIONS OF RTA PROGRAM CHANGES

Due to changes in the RTA Grant Program, the 2014–15 school year was the first year many teachers began implementing the new, RTA approved literacy interventions—even if their school was not new to the RTA program—resulting in some adjustment difficulties for RTA teachers. Training for Reading Recovery, used for first-grade, and CIM, used with all primary grades, is designed so that teachers cannot receive training for both programs in the same year. This meant that some teachers were receiving Reading Recovery training, but had to wait until the following year to receive CIM training. In the interim, RTA teachers were conducting small group sessions as best they could. One RTA teacher explained that, “for the group [interventions] it will be CIM next year, but for now [I am] using some Reading Recovery books and kind of winging it.” Additionally, some RTA teachers interviewed had difficulty obtaining the materials for new programs in time for the start of the school year.

<sup>14</sup> Teachers were able to indicate more than one primary intervention.

Both RTA teacher survey and interview data suggest the RTA approved intervention programs were not the only interventions being used. Table 11 shows non-RTA approved intervention programs RTA teachers reported having used. A lack of training, or comfort with another program previously used, is one possible reason teachers were straying from the grant-approved programs; however, more information is needed to determine conclusively why some teachers were using alternative programs. Despite some difficulty adjusting to new grant requirements, many teachers were enthusiastic about starting new intervention programs and felt confident in implementing them; one RTA said,

*“I’ve seen a big difference this year with the RR as compared to last year with the other program we used. I can see that the kids are improving. It’s going really well. I can see the kids progressing through their levels. And that is one major thing I can see between this program and the one we used last year.”*

Table 11. List of “other” programs being used by RTA teachers

Program	Number of RTA teachers reporting use			
	K	1st	2nd	3rd
Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI)	5	6	7	4
My Sidewalks	4	2	2	1
Guided Reading <sup>1</sup>	3	1	2	1
Orton-Gillingham	2	1		
Fountas and Pinnell	1	1	2	2
Soar to Success	1		1	4
Intervention by Design	1		1	1
Road to The Code	1			
Small group reading interventions	1		1	1
Earobics	1			
ELLG	1			
Early Success		2	2	
EIR, RR/CIM, Reading Mastery		1		
Reading		1		
RR/LLI/CIM		1		
Literacy Interventions				1

<sup>1</sup>Some RTA teachers may be using the term “Guided Reading” to mean CIM

## FUNDING

School administrators reported financial information pertaining to the RTA Grant Program. Of the 144 administrators who participated in the survey, 94 administrators were associated with schools using Reading Recovery and CIM, two were associated with schools using only Reading Recovery, four were



associated with schools using Reading Recovery and EIR, 43 were associated with schools using EIR, and one was associated with a school using Reading Mastery.<sup>15</sup>

When comparing schools associated with Reading Recovery/CIM to schools associated with EIR, the percentage of grant funds allotted to teacher salary and professional development were about the same with Reading Recovery at 94.5% and EIR at 92.1%. Very small percentages were allocated to the areas of materials, program, assessment, professional development. Slightly more funds were allotted to materials (3%), the program (2.8%), and assessments (1.1%) for EIR compared to Reading Recovery/CIM. Regardless of the program, about the same percentage of administrators, just over three-quarters, reported using supplemental funds to implement the RTA approved intervention program (see Figure 20). On average, administrators associated with schools using Reading Recovery/CIM reported using an additional \$15,855. Administrators associated with schools using EIR reported using an additional \$15,006. Overall, schools associated with Reading Recovery/CIM and schools associated with EIR had few funding differences. A larger sample across all programs would be needed to more fully understand funding differences by program.

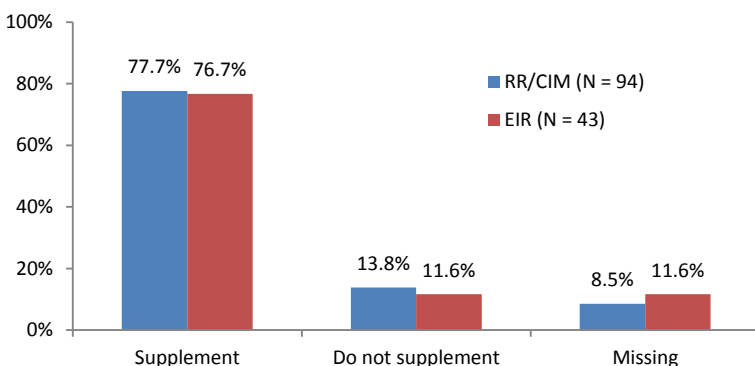


Figure 20. Percentage of administrators supplementing RTA grant funding by program

## RTA TEACHER PROGRAM TRAINING AND CONFIDENCE IN IMPLEMENTATION

### READING RECOVERY

Two hundred thirty-four RTA teachers reported using Reading Recovery as a primary intervention program. Nearly half (48.3 %) of those teachers were experienced with Reading Recovery and had taught it for five or more years. However, Figure 21 shows that 27.8 percent of RTA teachers were new to Reading Recovery, having taught the intervention for one year or less.

<sup>15</sup> Due to the small sample sizes of respondents associated with schools using only Reading Recovery, Reading Recovery and EIR, and Reading Mastery, findings were only reported for respondents associated with schools using Reading Recovery and CIM and schools using EIR.

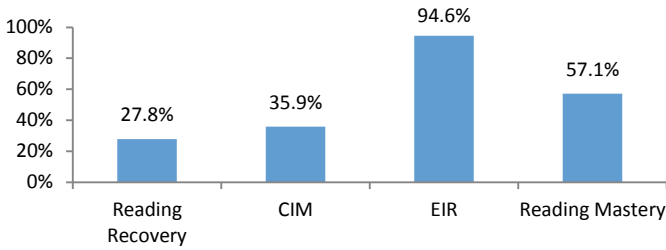


Figure 21. Percentage of “new” teachers (those who taught intervention one year or less) by intervention, fall 2014 (N = 321)

On average, RTA teachers had received 17.16 hours of training related to Reading Recovery since July 1, 2014. However, new teachers (those teaching Reading Recovery for one year or less) received considerably more training on average (38.9 hours). Nearly all teachers reported being very confident or fairly confident teaching Reading Recovery. Only eight teachers reported being not confident at all or not very confident teaching Reading Recovery, all of whom were new to the intervention.

#### CIM

In comparison to Reading Recovery, fewer RTA teachers (N = 153) reported using CIM as a primary intervention program. Of those reporting using CIM as a primary intervention, nearly one-third (27.6 %) were experienced with CIM, having taught it for five or more years. Similarly, just over one-third (35.9 %) were new to CIM, having taught it for one year or less. A majority of teachers, 82.2 % reported being very confident or fairly confident in teaching CIM. Teachers new to CIM (teaching CIM for one year or less) were less likely to express confidence; 40.7 % of new teachers reported feeling not very confident or not confident at all in regards to teaching CIM. On average, RTA teachers had received 11.6 hours of training related to CIM since July 1, 2014. Teachers new to CIM received slightly more training—13.1 hours of training on average.

#### EIR

Seventy-four teachers indicated EIR was a primary intervention program. Of those, nearly all (94.6 %) had been teaching EIR for one year or less (see Figure 21). On average, RTA teachers had experienced 6.68 hours of training related to EIR since July 1, 2014. Despite being relatively inexperienced with EIR, a majority of teachers (81.7 %) using EIR reported feeling very confident or fairly confident teaching the intervention.

#### READING MASTERY

Few teachers (N = 7) reported using Reading Mastery as a primary intervention program. Of those teachers, over half were new to Reading Mastery (57.1 %) (see Figure 21). Teachers new to the intervention program reported feeling not confident at all about teaching Reading Mastery. RTA teachers using Reading Mastery had received 1.71 hours of training Since July 1, 2014.

## TRAINING AND CHANGE IN CONFIDENCE

In the winter of 2014, RTA teachers were asked how many hours of training they had received over the past three months. On average, teachers had received an additional 16 hours of training since September 2014. Figure 22 shows the average hours of training RTA teachers received from July-September 2014 and January-April 2015. RTA teachers received more training before the school year began rather than towards the end of the school year for three of the four intervention programs (Reading Recovery, CIM, and EIR).

The majority of those hours were in Reading Recovery, followed by CIM.

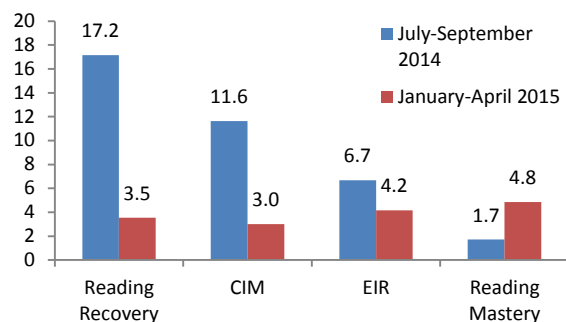


Figure 22. Hours of training received by RTA teachers in the Fall and Spring (N=321)

Most teachers (77.2%) received their training through face-to-face sessions. However, webinars (36.9%) and graduate classes (16.3%) were also reported.

RTA teachers were again asked about their confidence in teaching their primary intervention. After teaching their interventions for three months, nearly all teachers (91.6 %) reported feeling *Very Confident* or *Fairly Confident* implementing their intervention.

## PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Over the course of the year, RTA teachers' caseloads averaged 33 students. As Table 12 shows, on average, RTA teachers served the most students using EIR, followed by CIM and Reading Mastery; Reading Recovery tended to serve fewer students due to its one-on-one nature.

Table 12. Average RTA teacher caseload and program contact hours by program

	Average RTA teacher caseload	Average contact hours
Reading Recovery	6	28.8
CIM	18	26.6
EIR	34	37.4
Reading Mastery	18	38.0

Students were receiving reading intervention services very often. The frequency of the intervention was overwhelmingly reported as daily (see Table 13). EIR and CIM also reported that students received services 3-4 days a week.

*Table 13. Frequency of intervention by program (as percentages)*

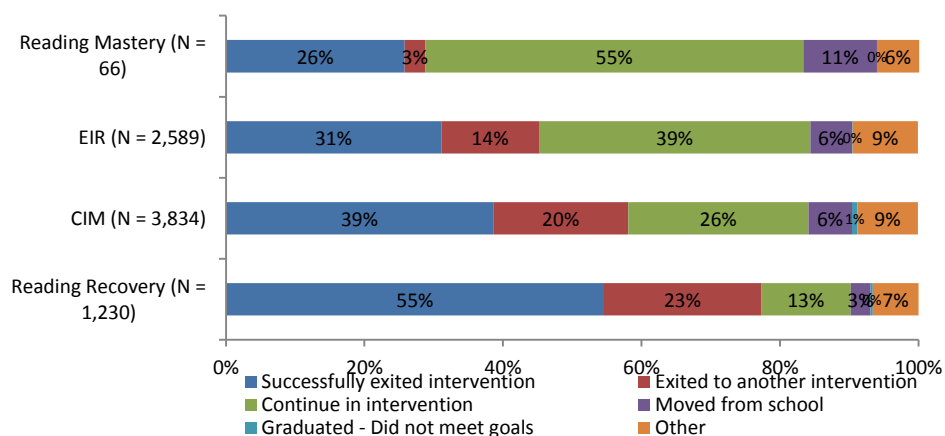
	Weekly	2 days/wk	3-4 days/wk	Daily
Reading Mastery (N = 70)	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%	98.6%
EIR (N = 2,807)	0.6%	0.5%	12.9%	86.0%
CIM (N = 4,135)	0.5%	2.1%	27.8%	69.6%
Reading Recovery (N = 1,348)	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	98.7%

Intervention duration was 30 minutes for the majority of students (72.5 %), with the notable exception of one-fifth of students in EIR who received the intervention for less than 30 minutes.

*Table 14. Percentage of responses by duration by program*

	<30 minutes	30 minutes	45 minutes	60 minutes	>60 minutes
Reading Mastery (N = 70)	0.0%	100%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
EIR (N = 2,416)	19.4%	72.5%	5.2%	2.2%	0.7%
CIM (N = 3,794)	9.0%	88.1%	2.7%	0.1%	0.0%
Reading Recovery (N = 1,265)	1.9%	96.6%	1.1%	0.4%	0.0%

Students in Reading Recovery and CIM were more likely to successfully exit the intervention programs (54.6% and 38.6% respectively) than in EIR and Reading Mastery. For EIR and Reading Mastery the most common outcome was for the student to continue in the intervention program (39.2 and 54.6 % respectively). Figure 23 shows the differing outcomes by intervention program.



*Figure 23. Results by intervention program*

## CHAPTER 8: PILOT IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

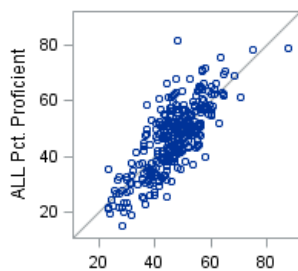
A pilot study was conducted in order to evaluate the feasibility of and improve upon future evaluations of program implementation. The main objectives of the pilot study were to identify top performing RTA schools and to quantify the quality of literacy instruction.

### METHODOLOGY

#### IDENTIFYING TOP PERFORMING SCHOOLS.

Using 2013 K-PREP data from RTA schools, the percent of students proficient on the K-PREP reading assessment was predicted, while controlling for school demographics (i.e., percent of students receiving free meals, percent of students considered special education, percent of English Language Learners, and

*Figure 24. Example of residuals*



percent of white, black, Hispanic, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian, and students of two or more races) by using regression analysis techniques.<sup>16</sup> The schools were then ranked by residuals so that schools performing better than expected were considered “top performers.” A residual is the difference between the observed value and the expected value. For example, in Figure 24 each dot is a school. The regression analysis calculated the expected value (which is the line) and the residual (which is the distance from each dot to the line). Dots above the line would be doing better than expected while dots

below the line would be doing worse than expected. This type of analysis allowed us to determine if schools were doing better, worse, or about what we would expect given their demographic make-up and compared to other RTA schools.

#### OBSERVATION MATERIALS AND PROCEDURE

Structured observations were conducted at nine schools identified by researchers as “top performing schools” using the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO; Smith & Dickinson, 2008). The ELLCO is designed as a broad language and literacy classroom observation with multiple ordinal scales. The ELLCO K-3 is intended for use in kindergarten through third-grade classrooms, and is divided into General Classroom Environment and Language and Literacy subscales. The General Classroom Environment subscale is comprised of classroom structure and curriculum sections. The Language and Literacy subscale is comprised of the language environment, books and reading, and print and writing sections. Individual indicators on each of the sections are scored on a range from 1 (deficient) to 5 (exemplary). The ELLCO also includes a brief teacher interview component that is designed to provide information supplemental to the observation.

The recently revised ELLCO K-3, Research Edition used for the RTA implementation study is currently undergoing analyses of the tool’s psychometric properties. Authors’ report inter-rater reliability scores

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<sup>16</sup>Scores were below 100 were excluded (as would be the case for the alternative K-PREP)

for the Literacy Environment Checklist at 80 percent, Classroom Observation Total at 90 percent and Literacy Activities Rating Scale at 81 percent for the previous iteration of the toolkit. Internal consistency for each of these scales is reported by the following Cronbach's alpha scores: Literacy Environment Checklist .84, Classroom Observation Total .90 and Literacy Activities Rating Scale Total .66.

Graduate level research assistants and project staff collected all program observation data. Observers were trained on observational and data collection procedures by a certified ELLCO trainer. All 19 observations were conducted from April-May 2015. Inter-rater reliability data were collected on about 10 percent of ELLCO observations (2 classrooms). Inter-rater reliability was high; the raters agreed on all categories within one point on a five point scale.

Observations lasted approximately one and a half hours and were conducted during literacy instruction. Observations occurred in first and second-grade classrooms. Observers were typically seated to the side of the classroom and, during observation, identified sources of evidence related to each item. For example, *organization of the classroom* was scored based on observations related to students' independent access of materials and activities, traffic flow in the classroom, and classroom furnishings.

## RESULTS

Identifying top performing RTA schools was achieved using the methodology described above. This methodology allowed researchers to control for certain school demographics which are often related to student outcomes. However, this methodology had certain drawbacks. Firstly, the data used to determine top performing schools included all students in the school, not only RTA students. This means "top performing" does not necessarily reflect the quality of the RTA Grant Program. Secondly, data used was from 2013; at that time, not all current RTA schools had received a RTA grant. Thirdly, proficiency on the K-PREP was used as the outcome variable despite the fact that K-PREP is administered to third, fourth, and fifth-grade students and does not reflect the intended RTA Grant Program beneficiaries (K-3 students).

Quantifying the quality of literacy instruction was attempted through the use of the ELLCO. The ELLCO is designed to be used in traditional classroom settings with observations lasting over an hour. RTA intervention settings differed from traditional classroom settings in many ways (e.g. teacher and student typically together less than 30 minutes and teacher prepares materials ahead of time). These differences meant that many items on the ELLCO did not apply to intervention settings. For example, to facilitate the limited time RTA teachers have with students, most teachers had materials set up ahead of time. This meant that no observations of traffic flow or independent access of materials was made potentially resulting in relatively low scores on the related item. Similarly, the intervention programs tended to target reading skills with limited focus on writing. Due to the irrelevance of some ELLCO items to intervention settings, some items were not scored for RTA teachers.

Although researchers only observed nine RTA schools, these individual observations took a considerable amount of time. Observing two classrooms in each of the 321 RTA schools for approximately one and a

half hours each would result in over 40 days of observations not accounting for time needed for scheduling and travel.

The purpose of the pilot study was to explore the feasibility of the ELLCO rather than to utilize the results in a meaningful way; none-the-less, the results of the observations are presented to provide information, although they are not intended to be conclusive. Table 15 shows the average observation scores by item; higher scores indicate exemplary performance. Professional focus (e.g., professional demeanor, consistent focus on students and their learning) has the highest level of exemplary performance with an average of 4.95. This was followed by classroom management (e.g., clearly communicated behavioral expectations, respectful interactions) and sounds to print (e.g., teacher provided strategies for decoding, engaging activities for practice) (3.75). Student writing products (e.g., students' written work includes a variety of genres, system in place to organize and store student work)(1.67) and recognizing diversity in the classroom (e.g., teacher uses information from students' home life in classroom activities, classroom materials reflect student diversity) (1.79) followed by writing instruction (e.g., focus on multi-step process, writing incorporated in other content areas) and writing environment (e.g., thoughtful feedback from teachers, student writing displayed in different stages) (1.83) were identified as areas for improvement.

*Table 15. Teacher observation scores by item*

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Organization of the classroom	19	3.32	1.057
Contents of the classroom	19	3.05	.970
Classroom management	19	3.79	.855
Professional Focus	19	4.95	.229
Integration of language and literacy	19	2.89	1.243
Opportunities for independence in learning	10	3.10	.876
Recognizing diversity in the classroom	19	1.79	.713
Discourse climate	19	2.95	.524
Opportunities for extended conversations	19	2.42	.692
Efforts to build vocabulary	19	2.63	.895
Characteristics of books	19	3.05	.524
Development of reading fluency	19	3.42	.769
Sounds to Print	19	3.79	.855
Strategies to build reading vocabulary	19	2.84	.834
Strategies to build reading comprehension	19	3.21	.713
Writing environment	6	1.83	.753
Focused writing instruction	6	1.83	.983
Students' writing products	6	1.67	.816

Figure 25 shows the mean scores by subscale. Classroom structure and books and reading were the two strongest areas (3.8 and 3.3 respectively). Print and writing and curriculum were areas for potential improvement (1.8 and 2.5 respectively).

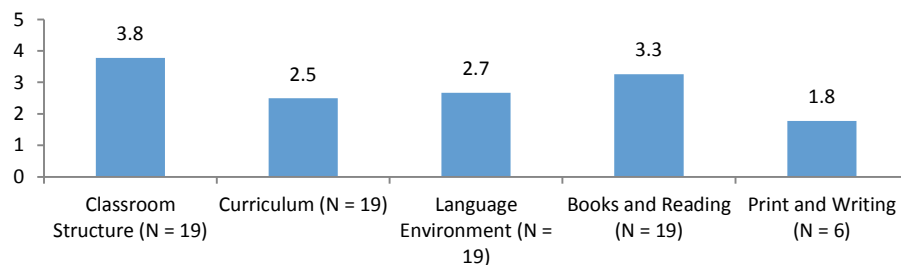


Figure 25. Average ELLCO scores by subscale

## TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS OF A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM

During phone interviews classroom and RTA teachers were asked why they thought their school was a “top performer.” Teachers mentioned communication and collaboration between classroom and RTA teachers as well as intervening early (e.g., kindergarten) and consistency. Below are verbatim quotes from classroom and RTA teachers describing the factors they view as being important to a successful RTA program.

*I think the key to a successful RTA program is communication and the buy-in from teachers. The more training the RTA teacher has the more the teachers are willing to accept what they say. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

*I can't say what other schools are doing or not doing, all I can say is... consistency is huge. If you're going to teach sounds a certain way you need to stick to teaching sounds that way and make sure they understand it and make sure it's on their level. And it's got to make sense to them and they've got to do it every day. And be able to apply those same skills and strategies in every setting they are in so that it will stick and they'll use it. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

*I think it has a lot to do with how we work collaboratively. With our primary team, everybody is on board and everybody wants those students to succeed. Nobody is stand-offish, everybody is pulling their weight to do whatever we need to do to get those kids where they need to be. The RTA teacher will pull extra students, besides first-graders she works with - multiple grade levels. And we as a team will do that too. We'll pull kids and give them that extra one on one and everybody is willing to do that. And I think that is a major reason why they are so successful. (Classroom teacher, AY14).*

*...we start early with the kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade literacy blocks ... starting students right where they are. We have some students in kindergarten that may be ready to read a simple text and we have some students that are still working on their letters at the beginning of the year. And with the reading interventions the early identification of students that may need a special education referral or may have a learning disability kind of helps too because we try to catch that within the first 2 or 3 years so we can build on that success or get them caught up to where they need to be. (RTA teacher, AY14).*



*I think it's that constant, those meetings, that constant collaboration and that talk between our RTA district person, me, our other interventionist. We're all on the same page and if we're not on the same page we get on the same page. (Classroom teacher, AY14).*

## CHAPTER 9: BARRIERS AND BENEFITS

### RTA TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

#### BENEFITS

During phone interviews, RTA teachers (N = 10) were asked about the benefits of the RTA Grant Program. A review of responses revealed frequently cited benefits. Identifying and assisting students that might normally “fall through the cracks” was one frequently cited benefit (N = 4). RTA teachers also mentioned boosting student confidence (N = 6) and improving student performance (N = 3). An additional benefit RTA teachers cited was the extra support they provided to classroom teachers (N = 5).

*I had a little boy who knew 2 words on the [entry test] at the beginning of the year, then he scored 20 on the test...when he was tested a couple of weeks ago...it just boosts their confidence. They're more apt to read independently. This child is just one I'll never forget because he had no confidence; he did not want to read. He has shown a lot of growth this year. - RTA teacher*

#### VERBATIM RTA TEACHER RESPONSES OF BENEFITS

*The RTA program gives the students the things that they need to be successful on their grade level. It gives them confidence and the skills they need (RTA teacher, AY14).*

*Getting those kids that would normally fall through the cracks and getting them up to where they need to be and making them to be better readers in the long run. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

*Whatever I can do to help [classroom teachers]; they have so many students...they can come to me for resources or ideas on how to help the children. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

*I feel like I've tried to be a leader in leading our school and showing them the importance of intervention. It's opened up a lot of teachers' eyes to what they can do in the classroom for their students and what areas they need to work on. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

#### BARRIERS

RTA teachers (N = 10) had the opportunity to share their perceptions of challenges of the RTA Grant Program. Over half of teachers (N = 6) reported program need exceeding available resources. RTA teachers wished for more money and more time in the day so that they would be able to reach all students who needed the additional help. Additionally, RTA teachers reported perceptions of other teachers as a challenge (N = 3). One teacher explained, “I personally think that not everybody understands what I do, and I understand that they're in their classroom and they've never done it and I had never done it before. But I kind of get the feeling that they think ‘Oh you have an easy job, you just sit there and work with a small group or one on one.’ They don't understand all the parameters that I have to follow... I don't know that the principal is aware of what I have to do—what I'm required to do.” Additional perceived challenges included: scheduling issues (N = 3) and inconsistency in the form of transient students or unforeseeable absences (e.g., snow days) (N = 2).

## VERBATIM RTA TEACHER RESPONSES OF BARRIERS

*Sometimes people will perceive, when they see you working one on one with the child that you're not doing as much. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

*We have so many students that are struggling and below level and to get to work with all those students K-3 is a challenge. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

*Money is always an issue. Sometimes we don't always have the support staff that we need, sometimes it's just one person trying to do a lot of different groups...there's not room. So you start with your lowest and you work your way up. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

## ADMINISTRATOR PERSPECTIVES

### BENEFITS

Administrators had the opportunity to describe the benefits of the RTA Grant Program in their schools. There were 335 responses analyzed and organized by theme when possible to reflect a salient concept. Not all responses were assigned a grouped theme. The majority of responses (N = 54) indicated that the greatest benefit was that the RTA Grant Program benefited struggling readers. There were many ways this was articulated and the percent may be greater than the 16.1 percent of responses in this area. There were 49 responses (14.6 %) highlighting the benefits of individualized instruction delivered through small groups or one-on-one. The benefit of training and support for teachers (11.3 %) combined with collaboration with teachers and families (6.9 %) shows administrators valued the contribution of the qualified teacher as part of the school team.

*"RTA teachers can contribute professional expertise in decision-making regarding literacy"*  
- Administrator

Table 16. Administrator perceptions of strengths of RTA (N = 335)

Theme	N	Percent
Intensive	3	0.90%
Research based	9	2.69%
Data/progress monitoring	15	4.48%
Qualified teacher	22	6.57%
Collaboration with teachers/families	23	6.87%
Improved student performance	24	7.16%
Training and support for teachers	38	11.34%
Individualized/small group/1:1	49	14.63%
Helps struggling readers	54	16.12%

### VERBATIM ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSES OF BENEFITS

*The progress monitoring data generated by the RTA teacher with her students can also be used for our Response to Intervention Program (literacy portion for the appropriate grade level) (RTA administrator; AY14)*

*RTA teacher collaborates/guides classroom teacher (to differentiate instruction for struggling readers)*

*Provide students who are struggling with reading comprehension and writing strategies that will allow the students to be successful in these areas. (RTA administrator; AY14)*

*More research based instructional tools are being used in the classrooms from training provided by the RTA professional. (RTA administrator; AY14)*

*Our RTA teacher is able to teach our other reading teachers valuable strategies for intervention groups. (RTA administrator; AY14)*

#### BARRIERS

Administrators were provided the opportunity to share their perceptions of challenges. There were 239 responses providing opportunities to identify themes and quantify some of the overall perceptions (see Table 17). Overall, the greatest concern for administrators was the cost, which was mentioned one-fourth (24.7 %) of the time. This was followed by 35 comments (14.6 %) indicating that there are too many students to serve and not enough time.

However, two administrators indicated *“Reading Recovery limits the number of kids we can serve”* and *“Number of students served is small.”* This may warrant further exploration. Time, space, resources, and needing more teachers were similarly mentioned.

*“I wish we could hire more people to implement the program so we could reach more students”  
- Administrator*

*Table 17. Administrator perceptions of barriers of RTA (N = 239)*

Theme	# of responses	Percent
Time away	4	1.67%
Meeting the needs of students	4	1.67%
Paperwork	4	1.67%
Lack of parental involvement	9	3.77%
Resources/more teachers	15	6.28%
Scheduling	16	6.69%
Time & space limitations	19	7.95%
Too many students/not enough time	35	14.64%
Cost/financial support	59	24.69%

#### VERBATIM ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSES OF BARRIERS

*“Scheduling is a challenge in order to get students serviced without missing core classes.”*

*“Providing services to all students with only one teacher”*

*“Once a teacher has too much experience we can't afford her”*

*“Making regular [classroom] teachers feel that being pulled away for RTA is truly beneficial”*

## CLASSROOM TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

### BENEFITS

Classroom teachers had the opportunity to describe the benefits of the RTA Grant Program in their schools. There were 804 responses analyzed and grouped by theme to reflect a relevant construct. Not all responses were assigned a grouped theme. Over one-third of responses (36.8 %) indicated that the greatest benefit was the individualized and small group instruction students received. Providing help to struggling readers was also a frequently cited benefit of the RTA Grant Program (19.3 %). More specifically, improving student performance seemed to be a benefit many teachers perceived; 12.6 % of responses indicated student performance was a significant benefit. Additionally, students gaining literacy skills/strategies and confidence seemed to be a common way in which classroom teachers viewed the RTA Grant Program as helping struggling readers with 8.3 % of teachers indicating this type of benefit. Additionally, direct, intense instruction, having a qualified teacher, and collaboration with teachers and families were benefits cited by numerous classroom teachers (8.0 %, 2.9 %, and 1.6 % respectively).

*"The most important benefit of our school's RTA program would be small groups and individual attention that each student receives"*  
- Classroom teacher

Table 18. Classroom teacher perceptions of strengths (N = 804)

Theme	# of responses	Percent
Individualized/small group/1:1	296	36.82%
Helps struggling readers	155	19.28%
Improved student performance	101	12.56%
Students gain literacy skills/strategies and confidence	67	8.33%
Direct, intense instruction	64	7.96%
Qualified teacher	23	2.86%
Collaboration with teachers/families	13	1.62%
Training and support for teachers	13	1.62%
Data/progress monitoring	9	1.12%
Early identification	8	1.00%
Differentiated instruction	6	0.75%

### VERBATIM CLASSROOM TEACHERS RESPONSES OF BENEFITS

*This program helps us move kids to their identified reading level. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

*[RTA teachers] help each struggling reader, we couldn't survive without them. They are the MOST IMPORTANT program in our school district, hands down. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

*They are able to receive direct instruction in an environment outside of the classroom. The students are able to practice/gain foundational skills that may not be able to be taught in the whole-group setting. The work/reading is on their level and they can gain confidence in their reading ability in a small group setting. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

*The program has benefited my students by increasing their reading fluency and confidence in reading. Since they work one on one, my students are able to gain more feedback about their reading and work on any struggling area. (RTA teacher, AY14).*s

*Students who do not necessarily meet the qualifications for an IEP, but still struggle are getting small group, intensive instruction. (RTA teacher, AY14).*

## BARRIERS

Classroom teachers were given the opportunity to share their views related to RTA Grant Program barriers; 712 teachers shared their perception of the most significant challenges. Overwhelmingly, classroom teachers identified the most significant challenge as the inability to accommodate all students who needed the service (56.5 %). Some teachers were more specific in their descriptions and identified the need for more time, more RTA teachers, or greater program capacity as specific barriers. The second challenge most frequently described was related to timing and scheduling (22.3 %). Some teachers (4.8 %) identified timing and scheduling issues specifically as students missing regular instruction time to attend RTA sessions. Lack of funding, resources, or space and a lack of parental support at home were additional barriers described by classroom teachers (2.8 % each). Other barriers can be found in Table 19.

*Table 19. Classroom teacher perceptions of barriers of RTA (N = 712)*

Theme	# of responses	Percent
Accommodating all students with needs	402	56.5%
More time needed	124	17.4%
More RTA teachers needed	86	12.1%
Greater program capacity needed	48	6.7%
Scheduling issues	159	22.3%
Out of classroom time	34	4.8%
Lack of funding, resources, or space	20	2.8%
Parental support and home-life challenges	20	2.8%
Entry decisions	15	2.1%
Closing the gap/catching students up	14	2.0%
Finding time to collaborate (RTA and classroom teachers) or communicate strategies	11	1.5%
Meeting individual students needs	8	1.1%
Paper work/planning/assessment hassles	8	1.1%
RTA participation limited by SPED status	6	0.8%
Student attendance	5	0.7%
Exiting and sustained benefit	4	0.6%
Program (e.g., lack of choice, does not match school curriculum)	4	0.6%
Students of special populations (e.g. ELL or transient)	4	0.6%
Homework completion	2	0.3%

## VERBATIM CLASSROOM TEACHER RESPONSES OF BARRIERS

There are so many students who could benefit from services yet there are limited slots. *(RTA teacher, AY14).*

Finding the time to pull students that is not during protected reading/math time. Often these students are below average across the board and have to miss instructional content for this program. *(RTA teacher, AY14).*

Meeting the needs of all the students that need extra assistance to the degree that they need it. Many are very behind to start with. *(RTA teacher, AY14).*

Time to collaborate and communicate between the classroom teacher and the RTA teacher. *(RTA teacher, AY14).*

The lack of flexibility to choose a child that you KNOW would benefit more/move along faster but cannot because of the criteria that is used in the selection process. Student attendance and work ethic should be a factor. *(RTA teacher, AY14).*

Getting parents involved and to read on a consistent basis with their child outside of school. *(RTA teacher, AY14).*

## CONCLUSION

The Read to Achieve Grant Program, established since 2005, is intended to help ensure students' reading proficiency by the end of the primary grades by providing schools with funds used primarily for hiring an intervention teacher who provides short-term, intensive instruction to students struggling with reading. The purpose of the evaluation of the 2014–15 RTA Grant Program was to more fully understand what the RTA Grant Program looked like beyond the grant mandated requirements and to determine if it was having a positive effect on participants' literacy skills. The three main focuses of the evaluation included: describing the RTA Grant Program, assessing RTA Grant Program outcomes, and exploring RTA Grant Program implementation. A summary of findings is presented as well as recommendations for future evaluations.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

#### RTA GRANT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In describing the RTA Grant Program, RTA teacher demographics, qualifications, experience, and RTA teachers' colleagues' perceptions were described. RTA teachers were highly qualified with Ranks 1 & 2, Masters, Doctorate, or National Board Certification. On average, RTA teachers had 17 years of total teaching experience and almost five years' of RTA teaching experience. However, it should be noted that one-third of RTA teachers were new to the RTA program in the 2014–15 school year. Administrators and classroom teachers were satisfied with RTA teachers; however, about one-fifth of administrators and classroom teachers did not necessarily agree that RTA teachers were strong in tasks related to leadership (e.g., leading decision making literacy intervention meetings or providing training for others in their school).

The RTA Grant Program was also described by exploring school collaboration and the relationship between classroom teachers and RTA teachers. Nearly all RTA schools had a formal collaborative team. Teams were generally led by principals (or other administrator) or RTA teachers and typically met monthly. Qualitative data indicated teachers had positive feelings towards regular meetings and found them valuable. RTA teacher and classroom teachers communicated informally as well. Initial data indicated communication between teachers was beneficial to both parties with feedback and suggestions resulting in teachers adjusting their instruction.

Funding was also considered in the RTA Grant Program description. Schools received \$48,500 at the start of the 2014–15 school year. On average, administrators reported spending 94 % of grant monies on teachers' salaries and for many schools, the RTA grant did not cover the full cost of the program. Three-quarters of administrators reported supplementing the grant funds in order to pay for the RTA intervention program or teacher.

The RTA program was also described in the form of typical RTA student experiences. There were 10,445 students served by the RTA Grant Program during the 2014–15 school year. First-graders were the most widely served, followed by second-graders, kindergarteners, and third-graders. RTA student demographics resembled those of non-RTA students. RTA teachers indicated program selection was



based on a universal performance screener and/or a classroom teacher referral (about one-third of RTA teachers reported using multiple assessments). Only a few RTA students were referred for services rather than being identified by specific assessments.

Once selected for the RTA approved intervention program, students tended to begin interventions one to three weeks after the start of the school year. The intervention was mostly provided through one-on-one instruction or in small groups of four to five students. Students most often received the intervention during literacy or other content area time.

Intervention program exit was most often determined by the RTA teacher. Frequently cited exit criteria included meeting established goals and/or achieving a target score on an assessment. Not all students exited the program successfully; more students continued in the intervention program or exited to another intervention than successfully exited. Qualitative interview data suggest exiting barriers may include student behavior or the need for special education.

The RTA Grant Program was also described in terms of differences between RTA approved intervention programs (i.e., EIR, Reading Recovery, CIM, or Reading Mastery). The majority of schools indicated they used Reading Recovery. Over the year, RTA teachers' caseloads averaged 33 students. On average, RTA teachers served the most students using EIR, followed by CIM and Reading Mastery. Reading Recovery tended to serve fewer students due to its one-on-one nature. Most interventions occurred daily and lasted an average of 30 minutes. Reading Recovery had the highest percentage of students who successfully exited the intervention program.

Stakeholders' perceptions of RTA Grant Program barriers and benefits also helped to describe the RTA program. RTA teachers, classroom teachers, and administrators reported similar benefits and barriers. The greatest benefit reported was that the RTA Grant Program helped students who might not otherwise receive intervention and that the program helped raise student confidence and scores. Administrators reported that the training and support for teachers, as well as, the small group instruction was a benefit. Both teachers and administrators reported that cost was a barrier, that there were too many students who needed help, and that time and space were limited to help so many.

#### RTA PROGRAM OUTCOMES

RTA program outcomes were assessed at the student- and school-levels. Students' average fall to spring growth on the MAP assessment was reported by grade and by subgroup. RTA students' MAP reading scores were significantly higher at spring administration compared to fall administration. Overall, RTA student fall to spring growth on the MAP Assessment was 17.1 points for kindergarteners, 15.8 points for first-graders, 17.1 for second-graders, and 13.4 points for third-graders. Second and third-grade RTA students' growth was greater than the average predicted growth indicating second and third-grade RTA students are making gains and closing the achievement gap. School characteristics (i.e. urbanicity, region, and strength of library media centers) did not influence RTA outcomes.

## RTA PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

A pilot study was conducted in order to explore the feasibility of assessing RTA Grant Program implementation through classroom observations. Results indicated future considerations for assessing implementation include: relevance of data used to determine top performing schools, the fit of the instrument for intervention settings, and the cost of individual observations.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION CHALLENGES

The RTA Grant Program initiated significant changes in the 2014–15 school year; RTA schools were required to select one of five programs and document and track RTA students using the Infinite Campus program. Program changes created some barriers to implementation and evaluation.

### IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGES TO GRANT-APPROVED PROGRAMS

Perhaps due to the new cohort of RTA schools, one-third of RTA teachers were new to RTA. Additionally, many RTA teachers with RTA experience were new to their school's intervention program. The newness of RTA teachers seemed to have multiple effects. Firstly, many RTA teachers reported using intervention programs not approved by the RTA Grant Program. Secondly, many teachers were unable to receive intervention program sanctioned training due to intervention program requirements. These findings weaken assumptions of RTA Grant Program implementation fidelity. A key component of the 2014–15 RTA program is the implementation of the select, grant-approved intervention programs and without implementation fidelity, the validity of reported outcomes is weakened.

### IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGES TO STUDENT TRACKING

The use of Infinite Campus to track students resulted in challenges related to data analysis. As one might expect with the roll out of any new system, the data entered was not perfect; some students were entered more than once. In some instances, it seemed students were entered when they began the program and then again when they ended. In other cases, students appeared to receive the intervention in the fall and spring, but each semester was entered separately. On still other occasions it appeared students switched schools. Additionally, students flagged as participating in RTA in the CIITS database did not always match students tracked in Infinite Campus.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, students flagged as participating in RTA in the CIITS database were not always matched to schools receiving the RTA grant. These data quality issues weaken the validity of reported conclusions. As stakeholders become more accustomed to Infinite Campus, data quality is expected to improve.

### DATA AVAILABILITY

The present evaluation relied heavily on MAP assessment data when considering student outcomes; however, the cons associated with using MAP data were considerable. Only about two-thirds of RTA schools used the MAP assessment meaning not all RTA schools were included in the evaluation of student outcomes. Additionally, MAP is frequently, although not always, used at two time points—fall and spring. Although this allowed for the consideration of student growth, there is no way to assure that

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<sup>17</sup> There were 121 students identified as a RTA student in the CIITS database, but with without corresponding data in the Intervention Tab; these students are not included in the analysis.

students' fall assessment scores reflect pre-intervention literacy skills and that spring assessment scores reflect post-intervention literacy skills. Additionally, since students receive the RTA intervention at differing points during the school year, time from intervention program completion and assumed post-intervention assessment (spring MAP assessment) may vary. Despite the drawbacks of using MAP data, it still was the best available option. This is due to the fact that RTA schools are able to select their own literacy assessment resulting in the use of a wide variety of assessments. Similarly, only MAP assessment, STAR assessment, and K-PREP assessment data are currently available on Infinite Campus. Although K-PREP would be available for all RTA schools it is not collected until third-grade, which means that there is no universal student achievement data available for all RTA schools for K-2 students (a majority of the RTA participants). It is also important to note that K-PREP data is collected at one time point and will not allow analysis of growth over a single school year.

Additionally, data reflecting a key student demographic—poverty—is not easily accessible. Free and Reduced Priced Meal (FRPM) data is often used as a proxy for student socio-economic status (SES); however, FRPM data is no longer available at the student-level.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the key findings of the evaluation and ability to synthesize the information due to challenges encountered, the following recommendations are provided:

- **Focus on RTA Grant Program implementation.** Assurance of RTA implementation fidelity will result in more meaningful results.
- **Continue training efforts.** With so any new teachers, training will improve consistency.
- **Expand the RTA Grant Program at RTA schools.** Overwhelmingly, stakeholders expressed student need exceeding program capacity. RTA teachers were not always able to reach all students who needed the intervention services. Increasing the number of available slots, increasing the time available for RTA interventions to occur, and/or increasing the number of literacy specialists are three possible solutions.
- **Continue parental involvement.** There is evidence of parental outreach. Teachers and administrators can seek to understand what more parents may need.
- **Consider the use of a universal literacy assessment at RTA schools.** To ensure all RTA schools are considered when assessing student outcomes it is important to have a universal measure that would allow measurement before program participation and after program completion.
- **Explore program factors related to student outcomes.** School collaboration, RTA teacher experience, and the intervention program used may be additional areas to explore. Additionally, comparing high performing and low performing RTA schools may allow for a better understanding of factors related to student success.
- **Examine alternate observation measures.** Finding a new measure, or modifying the current measure, to assess the quality of literacy specifically in intervention settings will provide more meaningful results.

## Appendix A: RTA Teacher Survey (Fall)

### RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation #1

\* 1. School District Name

\* 2. RTA School Name

\* 3. What is the six digit ID number for the school? (This can be found on your school report card.)

\* 4. How many total years of teaching experience do you have (including this year)?

\* 5. How many years of experience do you have as an RTA teacher (including this year)?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10

\* 6. How many years has your school had the RTA grant (including this one)?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10

\* 7. Identify the time frame that you began RTA intervention instruction (not testing) with most of your students.

- ☐ Week 1-2
- ☐ Week 3
- ☐ Week 4 or later

\* 8. Identify the RTA intervention groups for intervention instruction (check all that apply).

- ☐ one-on-one individualized instruction
- ☐ small group size 2-3 students
- ☐ small group size 4-5 students
- ☐ group size 6 or more

#### RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation #1

**For questions 9-20, only answer the questions about the intervention(s) you are currently implementing for the RTA grant.**

9. If EIR is the primary intervention you are implementing this year, how many years have you been teaching EIR (including this year)?

10. 13. How many hours of training for EIR have you had since July 1, 2014?

11. What is the level of confidence you have teaching EIR?

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Fairly confident
- ☐ Not very confident
- ☐ Not confident at all

12. If Reading Recovery is the primary intervention you are implementing this year, how many years have you been teaching Reading Recovery (including this year)?

13. How many hours of training for Reading Recovery have you had since July 1, 2014?

14. What is the level of confidence you have teaching Reading Recovery?

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Fairly confident
- ☐ Not very confident
- ☐ Not confident at all

15. If CIM is the primary intervention you are implementing this year, how many years have you been teaching CIM (including this year)?

16. How many hours of training for CIM have you had since July 1, 2014?

17. What is the level of confidence you have teaching CIM?

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Fairly confident
- ☐ Not very confident
- ☐ Not confident at all

18. If Reading Mastery is the primary intervention you are implementing this year how many years have you been teaching Reading Mastery (including this year)?

19. How many hours of training for Reading Mastery have you had since July 1, 2014?

20. What is the level of confidence you have teaching Reading Mastery?

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Fairly confident
- ☐ Not very confident
- ☐ Not confident at all

\* 21. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- ☐ Bachelors of Arts/Bachelors of Science
- ☐ Rank 2/5th Year
- ☐ Masters
- ☐ Rank 1
- ☐ Doctorate
- ☐ National Board Certification

\* 22. In what area is your postgraduate degree?

\* 23. Which webinar topics would be helpful in the future?

- ☐ Fluency
- ☐ Vocabulary
- ☐ Comprehension
- ☐ Response to Intervention
- ☐ English Learners
- ☐ Writing
- ☐ Progress Monitoring
- ☐ Questioning
- ☐ Other (please specify)



## Appendix B: RTA Teacher Survey (WINTER)

### RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation #2

\* 1. RTA School Name:

\* 2. School ID Number:

### RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation #2

#### RTA Teacher Information

\* 3. Do you have a Reading and Writing endorsement or Specialist degree?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Other (please specify)

\* 4. RTA requires districts to select an intervention strategy when they apply for funding. What is your school's primary intervention, taught by the RTA-funded teacher(s), for each grade level? (Enter "NA" if you do not have a grade or do not have an intervention selected for a grade.)

K

1

2

3

\* 5. What is the intervention you spend the most time implementing?

- \* 6. Based on your response to question 5, how many total hours of training have you received in the past 3 months (October, November, and December) to learn how to implement this intervention?

Total hours of training over  
past 3 months

- \* 7. What was the nature of this training?

- ☐ Face to face  
☐ Webinar  
☐ Graduate class  
☐ no training in last 3 months  
☐ Other (please specify)

8. What other literacy training have you received this year?

- \* 9. Please rate your confidence level for implementing this program with your students based on the training you have received.

Not Confident

Somewhat Confident

Confident

Very Confident

☐☐☐☐

## RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation #2

Literacy Team

- \* 10. Does your school have a formally identified literacy/RTA team?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

## RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation #2

\* 11. Please identify members of the RTA team (or RTI team if RTA fits into your school's RTI or system of intervention team) at your school. Check all that apply:

- ☐ RTA funded teacher(s)
- ☐ Data coordinator
- ☐ Primary level classroom teacher(s)
- ☐ Principal or other administrator(s)
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Other interventionist(s) (please specify)

\* 12. Who is responsible for leading the RTA meetings?

- ☐ RTA funded teacher(s)
- ☐ Data coordinator
- ☐ Primary level classroom teacher(s)
- ☐ Principal or other administrator(s)
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Other (please specify)

\* 13. How frequently do you meet?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ 2-3 Times a Week
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ 2 Times a Month
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ Four Times a Year
- ☐ Two Times a Year
- ☐ As needed
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## System of Interventions

\* 14. How would you rate the extent to which regular classroom teachers provide differentiated instruction for low performing readers in their classroom?

No use of differentiated instruction	Some use of differentiated instruction	Moderate use of differentiated instruction	Significant use of differentiated instruction
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 15. When do students at your school receive the RTA intervention?

- ☐ During regular classroom literacy time
- ☐ During other content instruction time (e.g., science, social studies, math)
- ☐ Either during literacy time or during other content area times, depending on what the schedule allows
- ☐ During a dedicated school-wide intervention/accelerated time
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation #2

### Collaboration Questions

\* 16. Please indicate how often you communicate about RTA students with classroom teachers who have your intervention students.

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 2-3 times a year
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ Daily

\* 17. Have you adjusted your classroom instruction for RTA students based on the feedback and/or communication with classroom teachers who have your intervention students?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

## RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation #2

18. What component(s) of your classroom instruction have you adjusted for RTA students based on the feedback and/or communication with the classroom teacher? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Reading material
- ☐ Method of providing instruction
- ☐ Grouping
- ☐ Instructional content/skills
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation #2

### Exiting RTA Students

\* 19. Who is responsible for deciding when students exit RTA? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ RTA teacher
- ☐ Administrator
- ☐ Classroom teacher
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Counselor
- ☐ Other (please specify)

\* 20. What are the exit criteria for a student to SUCCESSFULLY exit RTA services? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Grade level reading
- ☐ Met established goals and reading level
- ☐ Achieved target score on assessment
- ☐ No specified criteria have been set
- ☐ Classroom performance as judged by the classroom teacher
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## Appendix C: RTA Teacher Survey (Spring)

### 2014-2015 RTA Program Evaluation #3

\* 1. RTA School Name

\* 2. School State ID Number:

### 2014-2015 RTA Program Evaluation #3

3. Gender:

- ☐ Male  
☐ Female

4. Ethnicity:

- ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native  
☐ Asian/Pacific Islander  
☐ Black/African American  
☐ Hispanic/Latino  
☐ White/Caucasian

Other (please specify)

### 2014-2015 RTA Program Evaluation #3

RTA Teacher Training

\* 5. If Reading Recovery is the grant approved program you are implementing, how many total hours of training for Reading Recovery have you received this spring (January - April)?

- ☐ 0-3
- ☐ 4-10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 20+
- ☐ Reading Recovery is not the grant approved program we are implementing

\* 6. If CIM is the grant approved program you are implementing, how many total hours of training for CIM have you received this spring (January - April)?

- ☐ 0-3 hours
- ☐ 4-10 hours
- ☐ 11-20 hours
- ☐ 20+ hours
- ☐ CIM is not the grant approved program we are implementing

\* 7. If EIR is the grant approved program you are implementing, how many total hours of training for EIR have you received this spring (January - April)?

- ☐ 0-3 hours
- ☐ 4-10 hours
- ☐ 11-20 hours
- ☐ 20+ hours
- ☐ EIR is not the grant approved program we are implementing

\* 8. If Reading Mastery is the grant approved program you are implementing, how many total hours of training for Reading Mastery have you received this spring (January - April)?

- ☐ 0-3 hours
- ☐ 4-10 hours
- ☐ 11-20 hours
- ☐ 20+ hours
- ☐ Reading Mastery is not the grant approved program we are implementing

**2014-2015 RTA Program Evaluation #3**



### RTA student information

- \* 9. How many students during the 2014-2015 school year were considered eligible for reading intervention AND did not receive instruction from the RTA intervention teacher:

10. If you indicated that there were students eligible for RTA services, but did not receive them, what happened to those students?

- ☐ Placed on a waiting list
- ☐ Serviced by another interventionist in the school
- ☐ Serviced by the classroom teacher
- ☐ No services
- ☐ N/A - All students that were eligible for RTA services received them

11. If you served kindergarten students, what percentage of those students scored "Not Ready" on the K-Screen?

### 2014-2015 RTA Program Evaluation #3

#### Screening and Progress Monitoring

12. What sources are used to select students for RTA intervention? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Classroom teacher referral
- ☐ Parent referral
- ☐ Informal data on general classroom performance
- ☐ Past RTA participation
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Performance on universal screening (Please indicate the name of the screening measure):

### 2014-2015 RTA Program Evaluation #3

Library/media resources

13. Do you have a library media center program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2014-2015 RTA Program Evaluation #3

14. What percentage of time, during a typical week, is there a library media specialist in your building?

15. How would you rate the quality of the library media center program at your school?

- ☐ It is a strong program with little room for improvement
- ☐ It is a weak program with much room for improvement

2014-2015 RTA Program Evaluation #3

16. In your opinion, what would improve the library media center program?

2014-2015 RTA Program Evaluation #3

End of Year Questions

17. To the best of your knowledge will you be the RTA teacher at your current school next year?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Our school is closing

18. Please list any topics you would like to know more about or you think would be helpful during the RTA webinars next year:

## Appendix D: TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM TEACHER SURVEY

### RTA 2014-2015 Classroom Teacher Survey

You are being invited to take part in a research study about the RTA intervention program in your school. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and if at any point during the survey you do not wish to respond or share certain information, there will be no penalty for doing so. All of your responses on this survey will remain confidential and will in no way influence your job at the school. The survey will last approximately 15 minutes. We greatly appreciate your time and effort in completing this survey.

1. What grade(s) do you teach? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ 1st Grade
- ☐ 2nd Grade
- ☐ 3rd Grade
- ☐ Other (please specify)

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

3. What is the name of your school? (This question is being asked for response rate purposes only. We will not match your responses to your school.)

4. In what district is your school located?

5. Is this your first year teaching at this school?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

### RTA 2014-2015 Classroom Teacher Survey

Please provide the following voluntary demographic information:

6. Gender:

- ☐ Male  
☐ Female

7. Ethnicity:

- ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native  
☐ Asian/Pacific Islander  
☐ Black/African American  
☐ Hispanic/Latino  
☐ White/Caucasian  
☐ Other (please specify)

8. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- ☐ Bachelor's degree  
☐ Master's degree  
☐ Rank I  
☐ Other graduate degree

9. Do you have either of the following certifications?

	Yes	No
National Board Certified Teacher	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading or Literacy Specialist Certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

RTA 2014-2015 Classroom Teacher Survey

10. What RTA funded reading intervention program(s) are your students receiving? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Comprehensive Intervention Model (CIM)
- ☐ Early Intervention in Reading (EIR)
- ☐ Reading Mastery (sometimes called Direct Instruction or SRA)
- ☐ Reading Recovery
- ☐ Other (please specify)

11. In what ways were you involved in your school's RTA intervention program (in some capacity) this school year? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Assisted in selecting teaching materials
- ☐ Observation of RTA teacher
- ☐ Collaborated in planning RTA instruction
- ☐ Collaborated in making decisions about individual students' entry/exit in the RTA intervention program
- ☐ Participated in Literacy team meetings
- ☐ Collaborated in developing and/or providing professional development for the RTA intervention program
- ☐ Participated in professional development conducted by RTA teacher
- ☐ Received assistance from RTA teacher related to your instruction
- ☐ Other (please specify)

12. Please indicate how often you communicate about RTA students with your school's RTA intervention teacher:

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 2-3 times a year
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ Daily

**RTA 2014-2015 Classroom Teacher Survey**

13. Please indicate in what ways you have collaborated with your school's RTA teacher this year. Please check all that apply:

Please check each way that you have collaborated with your school's RTA this school year.

Developing professional development activities	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing instructional strategies	<input type="radio"/>
Selecting teaching materials	<input type="radio"/>
Consulting on students' progress	<input type="radio"/>
Participating in RTA meetings	<input type="radio"/>
Planning RTA classroom instruction	<input type="radio"/>
Planning my classroom instruction	<input type="radio"/>
Monitoring student progress	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying a student for intervention	<input type="radio"/>
Releasing a student from intervention	<input type="radio"/>
Working together with students in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>
I have not collaborated with the RTA teacher this year.	<input type="radio"/>

Other (please specify)

**RTA 2014-2015 Classroom Teacher Survey**

14. Have you adjusted your classroom instruction for RTA students based on the feedback and/or communication with your school's RTA intervention teacher?

☐ Yes

☐ No

#### RTA 2014-2015 Classroom Teacher Survey

15. What component(s) of your classroom instruction have you adjusted for RTA students based on the feedback and/or communication with your school's RTA intervention teacher? Please check all that apply:

☐ Reading materials

☐ Method of providing instruction

☐ Grouping

☐ Instructional content/skills

☐ Other (please specify)

#### RTA 2014-2015 Classroom Teacher Survey



16. When a student in your class is having reading difficulties, what do you do? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Assign different activities than for other students
- ☐ Assign different assessments for the student
- ☐ More frequent progress monitoring/assessment
- ☐ Provide more reading instruction time for the student
- ☐ Provide additional at-home activities
- ☐ Seek help from RTA teacher or other reading specialist
- ☐ Refer for special education testing
- ☐ Consult with other teachers
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**RTA 2014-2015 Classroom Teacher Survey**

17. Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding the RTA/intervention teacher:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Attends decision-making literacy intervention meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leads decision making literacy intervention meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides training for others in their school and/or district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lessons are observed by teachers to enhance the learning and/or understanding of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lessons are observed by parents to enhance the learning and/or understanding of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborates with classroom teachers (frequent and regular meetings/check-ins about intervention students)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordinates and/or performs progress monitoring duties for their intervention students as well as other RtI students at their school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Takes a leadership role in family literacy nights (	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Serves as a literacy resource to others (teachers/parents ask questions, seek advice, get new strategies, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**RTA 2014-2015 Classroom Teacher Survey**

18. How many students in your classroom have received reading intervention services from the RTA teacher this school year?

19. How many of these students have successfully exited RTA intervention to less intensive reading instruction?

20. How many of these students have exited RTA intervention to a more intensive reading intervention?

21. How many of these students received an additional reading intervention that wasn't part of the RTA intervention program?

22. How many of these students are involved in or have completed a referral process for special education services?

23. Indicate the average period of time (in weeks) that most closely resembles the amount of time your students receive the RTA funded intervention instruction:

#### RTA 2014-2015 Classroom Teacher Survey

24. Rate your agreement with the following statement: RTA is beneficial for students in my classroom.

☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Strongly agree

25. The single most important benefit of your school's RTA program is:

26. The single most significant challenge of your school's RTA program is:

27. How do you differentiate reading instruction in your classroom?

28. What, if any, additional instruction do you provide for struggling readers?

## Appendix E: ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

### RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin

- \* 1. What is the name of your school? (This question is being asked for response rate purposes only. We will not match your responses to your school.)

- \* 2. In what district is your school located?

- \* 3. How long have you been an administrator at this school?

### RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin

- \* 4. Describe your school's current status regarding the RTA grant:

- ☐ Have had RTA grant in the past  
☐ First year for the RTA grant

### RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin

- \* 5. If you are a current or former recipient of an RTA grant , have changes in funding for literacy interventionists impacted your ability to serve struggling readers?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin**

\* 6. If yes, how?

**RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin**

\* 7. Were you involved in selecting the intervention program used in the RTA classroom?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

\* 8. Were you involved in the hiring process of the current RTA teacher at your school?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin**

\* 9. What specific qualifications did you look for when hiring the current RTA teacher? Please check all that apply:

- ☐ Overall teaching experience
- ☐ Reading specialist certification
- ☐ Experience with the intervention program
- ☐ Cost of the teacher (teacher's salary level)
- ☐ Teacher's past effectiveness
- ☐ Recommendations from previous employers/supervisors
- ☐ Evidence of literacy leadership (e.g., volunteer experiences, conducting teacher trainings, etc.)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin**

\* 10. Please indicate how often you communicate about RTA students with your school's RTA intervention teacher:

- ☐ Never
- ☐ 2-3 times a year
- ☐ Once a Month
- ☐ Once a Week
- ☐ Daily

**RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin**

\* 11. Please indicate what percentage of money funded by the grant is allotted to each of the following areas (if none, indicate that by 0):

RTA Teacher Salary	<input type="text"/>
Intervention Materials	<input type="text"/>
Intervention Program	<input type="text"/>
Progress Monitoring Tool/Assessments	<input type="text"/>
Professional Development/Training	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

\* 12. Do you supplement the funds for the grant to pay for the RTA intervention program or teacher?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

#### RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin

\* 13. How much money does your school contribute to supplement the RTA program or teacher?

\* 14. What funding sources do you use to supplement the RTA program or teacher?

- ☐ Title 1 funds
- ☐ Special education funds
- ☐ General funds
- ☐ District funds

Other (please specify)

#### RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin



\* 15. Indicate the average period of time (in weeks) that most closely resembles the amount of time students receive the RTA-funded intervention instruction:

- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ 10-15 weeks
- ☐ 15-20 weeks
- ☐ 20-25 weeks
- ☐ 25-30 weeks
- ☐ >30 weeks

RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin

\* 16. Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding the RTA/intervention teacher:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Attends decision-making literacy intervention meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leads decision making literacy intervention meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides training for others in their school and/or district	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lessons are observed by teachers, parents, and/or administrators to enhance the learning and/or understanding of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborates with classroom teachers (frequent and regular meetings/check-ins about intervention students)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coordinates and/or performs progress monitoring duties for their intervention students as well as other RTI students at their school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Takes a leadership role in family literacy nights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Serves as a literacy resource to others (teachers/parents ask questions, seek advice, get new strategies, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin**

Benefits and challenges

\* 17. The three most important benefits of your school's RTA program are (Please list UP TO 3):

#1

#2

#3

\* 18. The three most significant challenges of your school's RTA program are (Please list UP TO 3):

#1

#2

#3

**RTA 2014-2015 Program Evaluation Admin**

Thank you

Thank you for your time

## **Appendix F: PHONE INTERVIEW PROMPTS**

### *Read to Achieve Evaluation Project*

#### *Implementation Study Teacher Interview 2014/2015*

##### ***Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Prompts:***

How does RTA implementation influence regular and RTA classroom environments and literacy instruction?

- Collaboration between RTA and classroom teachers
- Relationship/overlap between different interventions implemented within schools
- Supports for regular classroom teachers

What are the perceived benefits and barriers to implementing RTA in regular and RTA classrooms?

- Unintended consequences of RTA
- Continuous removal of students from classroom for intervention(s)

How is student progress defined and measured, and what entry/exit strategies are in place for students referred to RTA?

- When/how of student referral
- Defined exit strategy?
- How is progress monitored during RTA?
- Regular classroom supports post-RTA?
- Description of student's experience that was a success
- Description of student's experience that was not a success